SUCCESSWARD

BY

EDWARD W. BOK

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SUCCESSWARD

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A YOUNG MAN'S BOOK FOR YOUNG MEN

BY

EDWARD W. BOK

FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

NEW YORK CHICAGO TORONTO

1895

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TO

CLARENCE CARY,

MY ADVISER AND MY FRIEND, WHEN ADVISERS

I HAD NONE AND FRIENDS

WERE FEW,

I INSCRIBE THIS, MY FIRST BOOK.

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I

A CORRECT KNOWLEDGE OF HIMSELF

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I

A CORRECT KNOWLEDGE OF HIMSELF

THE first, the most essential, and the greatest element of success with a young man starting out to make a career is a correct knowledge of himself. He should, before he attempts anything, understand himself. He should study himself. He should be sure that, no matter whom else he may misunderstand, he has a correct knowledge of his own nature, his own character, and his own capabilities. And it is because so few young men have this knowledge of self that so many make disastrous

failures, or fail in achieving what they set out for themselves at the beginning.

Every man in this world is created differently; no two are alike. Therefore, the nature, the thoughts, the character, the capacity of one man is utterly unlike that of another. What one man can understand another cannot. The success of one man indicates nothing to a second man. What one is capable of doing is beyond the power of another. Hence it is important that, first of all, a young man should look into himself, find out what has been given him, and come to a clear understanding of what he can do and what he cannot do.

It is one of the most pitiable sights imaginable to see, as one does so constantly, young men floundering and fluttering from one phase of life to another, unable to fasten upon any one, simply because a knowledge of themselves is absent. The result is, that we see so many round men trying to fit themselves into square holes.

"But," some one will say, as asked a young fellow recently, "how in the world do you get at an understanding of yourself? How do you go about it?" No definite answer can be given to the question, any more than can a certain rule be laid down. An understanding of one's self is reached by different methods by different people, generally each method being personal to one's self. But this much can be said: every thought, every taste, every action, reveals ourselves to ourselves, and it is in the expression of these that we best learn our natures and our characters. We see ourselves with unmistakable accuracy, for example, in what we most enjoy in reading, in the people whose company pleases us most, in the things that interest us; and where our tastes and interest lead us we are generally truest to ourselves.

Some writer has said that most people find themselves out best while they are at play, upon the basis that a man shows his real side in the pleasures which he seeks and enjoys.

This is true in a large measure. And the character of his pleasures will have both an indirect and a direct bearing upon the more practical side of his nature. If a young man visits an art gallery, for example, and finds that the pleasure he derives from the pictures takes the form of recreation to the mind, that he is delighted and interested in the canvases he sees so long as he is before them, but feels simply refreshed after he leaves the gallery, it is plain that his nature is not one suited to art as a vocation. He employs the picture as a means of recreation from some other study which has engrossed him most. If, on the other hand, his instincts lead him to an art gallery, and he studies rather than enjoys the pictures that he sees, is curious as to the methods of the artist, and goes away with his mind charged with the intention of getting further knowledge of what he has seen from books or other authorities, it is natural to assume that the art instinct is within him, and he should give it the fullest

chance of development. But he should in every way feel, realize, and know that a love of art possesses him before he adopts it as a profession. And thus, in a way, a young man has an opportunity to study himself through his pleasures.

If, as a further example, a young man finds himself seeking the company of men older than himself, men of affairs of the world, is happiest when he can be in their company and hear them talk of business, chooses the reading of the lives of successful men as his literature, and leans toward the practical side of life, finding more real enjoyment amid the bustle of the mart than in the quiet of lane or park, the indications are that his nature points him to a business career rather than to a professional calling. If he feels this way, it is well for him to give his developing tastes full play, and follow where his instincts lead him. After a while what was at first a mere instinct or an unformed taste will develop and point him to some-

thing definite in the business world, and if he be true to himself he will sooner or later find himself in that particular position which he is best fitted to occupy and fill. His capacities will reveal themselves to him, and they will teach him his limitations. This knowledge need not thwart his ambitions, but I believe that ambition should always be just a trifle behind judgment, if possible, or, at all events, not in advance of it. Ambition is a splendid quality if properly guided and kept within check; it is a fatal possession when it is allowed too full development or sway. Like fire or water, it is a capital servant, but it makes a poor master.

I do not counsel, nor do I believe in, a blind following of one's self, particularly during the formative years of life. But I do believe most earnestly that every man is given a certain thing to do in the world, and that, by a proper study of himself, he, and he alone, can arrive at the clearest and surest knowledge of that particular object. I am a

firm believer in the molding of character through the influence of another; but my conviction is equally strong that every man is the architect of his own fortune, and that his truest course in life is to follow not the guidance of another, but his own instincts. In other words, I think young men should, as early in life as possible, get into touch with the idea of their own responsibility, and be taught the great lesson that, however well others may advise, they, and they alone, must carve out their own careers. The most successful careers, the most honorable lives in the history of the world are those which have been shaped by their own hands. There is an element of danger in this, of course, but the element is small in comparison with the greater danger which lies in the foundation of a character against one's own instincts.

The aspirations of the young are not to be checked by the experience of the old. No matter how rich or full a man's experience

may have been, it counts only in a sense of general application to another career which stands upon its threshold. Years should teach wisdom; but if we all waited for years to bring us wisdom, this world would be a sorry place to live in. Youthful imaginings may lead to mistakes, youthful enthusiasm may encounter disappointment, but only experience, real and actual, can demonstrate these things to a young man. And the experience is good for him if it teaches him a better and truer knowledge of himself and his capacities. The greatest figures in the world's history show that they were made through experience, and what experience taught them. This is not saying that the young have no use for the old. They have. But the rule should be, "Young men for action, old men for counsel." Experience looks backward; enthusiasm looks forward. And, as between the two, enthusiasm is worth more than experience, since it is the

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former which is brave and strong and attempts the impossible. If we attempted only the possible in this world we should soon stop where we are; it is for the young man, with his enthusiasm, to battle with the impossible and carry the world a step farther on in discovery, if not in actual accomplishment.

I say all this because I want every young fellow to feel that, to a large extent, he stands alone for himself in the world. Counsel he may seek and he should seek, but the action is his, and his alone. And to make that action sure and wise it is necessary that the workman should understand his tools. He must know with what he has to work; and once sure of his tools, he must learn the thing he has set for himself to do, having a distinct purpose in view, and, being fully conscious that he is right and capable, not allowing himself to be swerved from his aim. After acquiring true knowledge of himself, I

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know of nothing so valuable to a young man as an absolute distinctness of purpose, and then pursuing that purpose to success. In natural sequence comes, therefore, the question of "What, really, is success?"

II

WHAT, REALLY, IS SUCCESS?

II

WHAT, REALLY, IS SUCCESS?

BEFORE a young man goes into business it is necessary, I think, that he should set himself straight on one very important point, and that is what success in business really is and means. Unfortunately, not enough has been written on this phase of the topic. It is idle for a young man to seek out the methods of success before he is really clear in his mind just what constitutes success—until, in other words, he finds out the true definition of the word. And very few of us have a proper and correct conception of it. On the other hand, thousands of us have the wrong notion.

In this age of big things, particularly, we

are inclined to regard success as synonymous only with the higher walks of life, with great achievements. Success, in the minds of some, is something which is only given for the fortunate to achieve. Or we think that if we cannot do something which sets people talking or wondering about us, if our heads do not tower above those of our fellow-beings, our lives, if not altogether negative, are still not successful. In other words, we feel that a successful life is the doing of something momentous; the becoming known of all men and women; the being exceptional to the rest of the human race. Ask ten people their idea of success, and I warrant that eight will give a definition of it along these lines. And yet, when we look at the matter closely and study it carefully, scarcely a more incorrect interpretation of a successful life can be imagined. Along this line of thought, not one person in ten thousand lives a successful life, since statistics have informed us that it is only this percentage of the

human race that is ever heard of outside of its immediate circle of relatives and friends.

It is given to very few of us to say something or perform some action which will be heard of by the world. The greater part of the human race dies as it is born, unknown and unheard of by the world at large. Where you find one leader among men or women you will find a thousand who prefer to follow. The instinct of leadership is rare—rare even in these developing days. Hence, if success depended upon aggressive instinct, its votaries would be few. Success is as ofttimes quietly won. I think that young men are oftener misled by wrong notions of what constitutes success than by how to achieve success as they understand it.

The average young man's idea of success is like unto that of people of older growth, as I hinted in a preceding paragraph—it means the accomplishment of something great. He cannot understand that a successful life is just as possible in an obscure

position as it is in a conspicuous one. It does not seem plain to him that a clerk earning five hundred dollars per year can make just as pronounced a success of his life as can his employer, whose income is ten thousand dollars, or even one hundred thousand dollars, per year. He is apt to measure success by dollars, and here is the rock upon which so many young men split. To be a successful subject is as great an achievement for the subject as being a successful ruler is creditable to the ruler. Every man born into the world has his limitations, and beyond that line it is simply impossible for him to go. All of us know men capable of splendid work so long as they are under direction, but who have either made or would make absolute failures as directors. Other men chafe under direction; they must be leaders. But success is as possible with the one as with the other.

The correct definition of success is the favorable termination of anything attempted

—a termination, in other words, which answers the purpose intended. The writing of a business letter can be made just as great a success as can be the drafting of a presidential proclamation. Success never depends upon conspicuity, and it never will. If we accepted as the successful men of the time only those who are in conspicuous places and of whom we know, we should narrow success down to a very few. Great successes have been made as often in quiet ways as with the blare of trumpets. A commercial success won on conservative lines, and maintained by cautious and prudent methods, is the success most highly regarded in the business world to-day. The meteoric commercial flash, so admired by the average young man, seldom has a firm foundation, and rarely commands the confidence of experienced business men. The truest success is that which is earned slowly, but which surely strengthens itself. Ostentation is never typical of a true success. It is always a good

thing to remember that the vast majority of successful men are never heard of. It is very important, therefore, that the first thing for a young man going into business to learn is to disassociate success from the more prominent walks in life, and get rid of that false theory. When he does that, successful living will have a deeper, fuller, and truer meaning for him. It will have for him then its correct meaning: that success is possible in every position, and can be made the possession of the humblest as well as the most powerful.

A successful life is nothing more nor less than living as well as we know how and doing the very best that we can. And upon that basis, which is the only true basis, naturally no success can be measured by fame, wealth, or station. Some of us must live for the few, as others again must live for the many, just as some are born to occupy important positions while others are intended for humbler places. But both lives are successful.

Let a young man be thoroughly fitted for the business position he occupies, alert to every opportunity, and embracing it to its fullest possibility, with his methods fixed on honorable principles, and he is a successful man. It does not matter whether he makes a thousand dollars or a hundred thousand dollars. He makes a success of his position. He carries to a successful termination that which it has been given him to do, be that great or small. If the work he does, and does well, is up to his limitations, he is a success. If he does not work up to his capacity, then he fails, just as he fails, too, if he attempts to go beyond his mental or physical limit. There is just as much danger on one side of man's limit-line as there is on the other. The very realization of one's capacity is a sign of success. It is an old saying that it is a wise man who knows when he has enough, and it is a successful man who never goes beyond his depth in business. This is a truth which requires

experience to see, perhaps, but it is a lesson which Success demands that her votaries shall learn, and learn well. Success is simply doing anything to the utmost of one's ability —making as much of one's position as it is possible to make.

III

THE YOUNG MAN IN BUSINESS

III

THE YOUNG MAN IN BUSINESS

EVERY one conversant with the business life of any of our cities, large or small, will, I am sure, agree with me that more business opportunities exist to-day than there are young men capable of embracing them, and that the demand is far in excess of the supply. Positions of trust are constantly going begging for the right kind of young men to fill them. But the material does not exist, or, if it does, it certainly has a most unfortunate way of hiding its light under a bushel; so much so that business men cannot see even a glimmer of its rays. Let a position of any real importance become open, and it is the most difficult

kind of a problem to find anyone to fill it satisfactorily. Business men are constantly passing through this experience. Young men are desired in the great majority of positions because of their progressive ideas and capacity to endure work; in fact, "young blood," as it is called, is preferred nowadays in nine positions out of every ten. The young men capable of filling these positions are few. For the most part, the average young man is incapable, or, if he be not exactly incapable (I am willing to give him the benefit of the doubt), he is unwilling, which is even worse. That exceptions can be brought up to controvert this statement I know; but in these remarks I am dealing with the many, and not with the few. It is the exception that we find in business to-day a young man who is something more than a plodder—a mere automatic machine. As a general rule, the average young man comes to his office at nine o'clock in the morning; is faithful in the duties he performs; goes to

lunch at twelve; comes back at one; takes up whatever he is told to do until five, and then goes home. His work for the day is done. One day is the same to him as another; he has a certain routine of duties to do, and he does them day in and day out, month in and month out. His duties are regulated by the clock. As that points, so he points. Verily it is true of him that he is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. No special fault can be found with his work. Given a particular piece of work to do, he does it just as a machine would. Such a young man, too, generally considers himself hard-worked—often overworked and underpaid—wondering all the time why his employer does not recognize his value and advance his salary. "I do everything I am told to do," he argues, "and I do it well. What more can I do?"

This is simply a type of a young man who exists in thousands of offices and stores. He comes to his work each day

with no definite point or plan in view; he leaves it with nothing accomplished. He is a mere automaton. Let him die, and his position can be filled in twenty-four hours. If he detracts nothing from his employer's business he certainly adds nothing to it. He never advances an idea; is absolutely devoid of creative powers; his position remains the same after he has been in it for five years as when he came to it.

Now I would not for a moment be understood as belittling the value of faithfulness in an employee. But, after all, faithfulness is nothing more nor less than a negative quality. By faithfulness a man can hold a position a lifetime. He will keep it just where he found it. But by the exercise of this single quality he does not add to the importance of the position any more than he adds to his own value. It is not enough that it should be said of a young man that he is faithful; he must be something more. The willingness and capacity to be faithful to the

smallest detail must be there, serving only, however, as a foundation upon which other qualities are built.

Altogether too many young men are content to remain in the positions in which they find themselves. The thought of studying the needs of the next position just above them never seems to enter into their minds. I believe it is possible for every young man to rise above his position, and I care not how humble that position may be, nor under what disadvantages he may be placed. But he must be alert. He must not be afraid of work, and of the hardest kind of work. He must study not only to please, but he must go a step beyond. It is essential, of course, that he should first of all fill the position for which he is engaged. No man can solve the problem of business before he understands the rudiments of the problem itself. Once the requirements of a position are understood and mastered, then its possibilities should be undertaken. It is foolish to argue, as some

young men do, that to go beyond one's special position is made impossible by an employer. The employer never existed who will prevent the cream of his establishment from rising to the surface. The advance of an employee always means the advance of the employer's interest. Every employer would rather pay a young man five thousand dollars a year than five hundred. What is to the young man's interests is in a far greater degree to the interests of his employer. A five-hundred-dollar clerkship is worth just that amount to an employer, and nothing more. But a five-thousand-dollar man is fully worth five times that sum to a business. A young man makes of a position exactly what he chooses, either a millstone around his neck or a stepping-stone to larger success. The possibilities lie in every position; seeing and embracing them rest with its occupant. The lowest position can be so filled as to lead up to the next and become a part of it. One position should only be the chrysalis for the

development of new strength to master the other just above it.

A substantial success means several things. It calls, in the first place, for concentration. There is no truth so potent as that which tells us that we cannot serve God and Mammon. Nor can any young man successfully serve two business interests, no matter how closely allied; in fact, the more closely the interests the more dangerous are they. The human mind is capable of just so much clear thought, and generally it does not extend beyond the requirements of one position in these days of keen competition. If there exists a secret of success, it lies, perhaps, in concentration more than in any other single element. During business hours a man should be in business. His thoughts should be on nothing else. Diversions of thought are killing to the best endeavors. The successful mastery of business questions calls for a personal interest, a forgetfulness of self, that can only come from the closest applica-

tion and the most absolute concentration. I go so far in my belief of concentration to business interests in business hours as to argue that a young man's personal letters have no right to come to his office address, nor should he receive his social friends at his desk. Business hours are none too long in the great majority of our offices, and with a rest of one hour for luncheon, no one has a right to chop off fifteen minutes here to read an irrelevant personal letter, or fifteen minutes there to talk with a friend whose conversation distracts the mind from the problems before it. Digression is just as dangerous as stagnation in the career of a young man in business. There is absolutely no position worth the having in business life to-day to which a care of other interests can be added. Let a man attempt to serve the interests of one master, and if he serves him well he has his hands and his head full.

There is a class of ambitious young men who have what they choose to call "an anchor

to the windward" in their business; that is, they maintain something in addition to their regular position. They do this from necessity, they claim. One position does not offer sufficient scope for their powers or talents, does not bring them sufficient income; they are "forced," they explain, to take on something in addition. I have known such young men. But so far as I have been able to discern, the trouble does not lie so much with the position they occupy as with themselves. When a man turns away from the position he holds to outside affairs, he turns just so far away from the surest path of success. To do one thing perfectly is better than to do two things only fairly well. It was told me once, of one of our best-known actors, that outside of his stage-knowledge he knew absolutely nothing. But he acted well—so well that he stands to-day at the head of his profession, and has an income of five figures several times over. All-around geniuses are rare—so rare that

we can hardly find them. It is a pleasant thing to be able to talk well on many topics; but, after all, that is but a social accomplishment. To know one thing absolutely means material success and commercial and mental superiority. I dare say that if some of our young men understood the needs of the positions they occupy more fully than they do, the necessity for outside work would not exist.

Right in line with this phase of a young man's work comes the necessity of his learning that he cannot do evening work and be employed the entire day as well. It is the most difficult thing for ambitious young men to understand that night-work is physically and mentally detrimental to the best business success. Let a machine run night and day, and before long it will break down; and what a mechanism of iron and steel cannot bear, the human organism certainly cannot stand. If a young man employs his evenings for work, he unfits himself for his work during the day. The mind needs diversion,

recreation, rest; and any mentality kept at a certain tension for more than seven or eight hours per day will sooner or later lose its keen perceptive powers. No young man true to his best and wisest interests will employ his evenings in the same line of thought as that which engrosses him during the day. Mental work is unlike manual labor in that it tires without physical exhaustion; and because the worker does not feel it as much when he uses his head for ten or twelve hours per day as he would if he used the muscles for that period of time, he goes, nevertheless, unconsciously beyond his powers of strength. Unknown to him, the strain leaves its mark upon the mind. Youthful vigor throws its effects off for a while, but not permanently; and a man's early breakdown when he should be at the zenith of his powers in middle life is very often directly traceable to an overtaxing of his powers in early life. But not only is the effect of a future character; it is noticeable at the time of

the indiscretion. It is seen in the inability of the mind to respond quickly to some suggestion at the office; and how can it be otherwise when the mind has been worked beyond its normal capacity? There is no question in my mind whatever that a young man is untrue to the interests of his employer when he allows himself to work during the evening hours. Although he may not be conscious of it himself, he does not come to his work the following morning as fresh as he might if the mind had been given a season of diversion and rest.

I know whereof I speak when I touch upon this subject. In common with other young men who are wiser than their best advisers, I made the mistake of evening work. For several years I gave up four or five evenings of each week to literary work. My family, my best friends, my physician, warned me to desist. But I knew better. Others, I conceded, undoubtedly had suffered from what I was doing, but I should

not. I was strong, young, and of excellent physique. I could stand it; others could not; in fact, I was an exception to the rest of the human race. Two or three years went by, and I was proud of proving to my advisers that I was right and they were wrong. But suddenly, with scarce a warning, the blow came. Irritability and nervousness came first; everything annoyed me. The closing of a door, or the sudden entrance of a person into the room, caused me to start. The harder I worked the less I seemed to accomplish. I could not understand it. Then I began to lie awake for a half-hour after I retired; after a while the half-hour lengthened into an hour, then into two hours. Finally I had insomnia. After a bit my digestion did not seem to be as regular; a heavy feeling possessed me after eating. I was ordered away; stayed a week when I was told I should remain for a month. But, of course, I knew better. And what is the result? For the past three years I have suffered from

an indigestion as constant as it is keen; and to-day I have to regulate my food, my hours, and my habits, with the pleasing prospect that at least two years of such living are ahead of me before I can hope for relief. And why? Simply because of working, years ago, when I should have been resting. But then I did not understand it. I do now, and I wish that every young man who reads these words might profit by my error. I am fortunate to get off with nothing more serious than indigestion, but even that affliction has pains which only those who have suffered them can begin to fully realize. Night-work, when employed in the day, does not pay; on the contrary, it kills. I wish fervently and sincerely that five, eight, or ten years ago I might have reached this point of wisdom. I did not, but I write it now and here as a warning to young fellows who value their health, their happiness, their peace of mind, and a comfortable feeling in the pits of their stomachs.

A fatal error in the case of many young men is that they reach a point where they make no progress. Now stagnation in a young man's career is but a synonym for starvation, since there is no such thing as standing still in the business world of to-day. Either we go backward or we go forward. When a young man fails to keep abreast of the possibilities of his position he recedes constantly, if unconsciously, perhaps. The young man who progresses is he who enters into the spirit of the business of his employer, and who points out new methods to him, advances new ideas, suggests new channels and outputs. There is not a more direct road to the confidence of an employer than for that employer to see that any one of his clerks understands the details of his business better than himself. That young man commands the attention of his chief at once, and when a vacancy occurs he is apt to step into it, if he does not forge over the shoulders of others. Young men who think clearly, who

can conceive, create, and carry out, are not so plentiful that even a single one will be lost sight of. It is no special art, and it reflects but little credit upon any man, to simply fill a position. That is expected of him; he is engaged to do that, and it is only a fair return for a certain payment made. The art lies in doing more than was bargained for; in proving greater than was expected; in making more of a position than has ever been made before. A quick conception is needed here, the ability to view a broad horizon; for it is the liberal-minded man, not the man of narrow limitations, who makes the success of to-day. A young man showing such qualities to an employer does not remain in one position long.

Two traps in which young men in business often fall are a disregard for small things, and an absolute fear of making mistakes. One of the surest keys to success lies in thoroughness. No matter how great may be the enterprise undertaken, a regard for

the small things is necessary. Just as the little courtesies of every-day life make life worth the living, so the little details form the bone and sinew of a great success. A thing half or three-quarters done is worse than not done at all. Let a man be careful of the small things in business, and he can generally be relied upon for the greater ones, provided, of course, that he possesses broadness of mind. The man who can overcome small worries is greater than the man who can override great obstacles. When a young man becomes so ambitious for large success that he overlooks the small things, he is pretty apt to encounter failure. There is nothing in business so infinitesimal that we can afford to do it in a slipshod fashion. It is no art to answer twenty letters in a morning when they are, in reality, only half answered. When we commend brevity in business letters we do not mean brusqueness. Nothing stamps the character of a house so clearly as the letters it sends out.

The fear of making mistakes keeps many a young man down. Of course errors in business are costly, and it is better not to make them. But, at the same time, I would not give a snap of the finger for a young man who has never made mistakes. But there are mistakes and mistakes; some easy to be overlooked, and others it is better not to blink at in an employee. A mistake of judgment is possible with us all; the best of us are not above a wrong decision. And a young man who holds back for fear of making mistakes loses the first point of success.

I know there are thousands of young men who feel themselves incompetent for a business career because of a lack of early education. And here might come in—if I chose to discuss the subject, which I do not—the oft-mooted question of the exact value of a college education to the young man in business. Far abler pens than mine have treated of this; it is certainly not for me to enter into it here. But I will say this: a young

man need not feel that the lack of a college education will stand in any respect whatever in the way of his success in the business world. No college on earth ever made a business man. The knowledge acquired in college has fitted thousands of men for professional success, but it has also unfitted other thousands for a practical business career. A college training is never wasted, although I have seen again and again five-thousand-dollar educations spent on five-hundred-dollar men. Where a young man can bring a college education to the requirements of a practical business knowledge it is an advantage. But before our American colleges become an absolute factor in the business capacities of men, their methods of study and learning will have to be radically changed. I have had associated with me both kinds of young men, collegiate and non-collegiate, and I must confess that the ones who had a better knowledge of the practical part of life have been those who

never saw the inside of a college and whose feet never stood upon a campus. College-bred men and men who never had college advantages have succeeded in about equal ratios. The men occupying the most important commercial positions in New York to-day are self-made, whose only education has come to them from contact with that greatest college of all, the business world. Far be it from me to depreciate the value of a college education. I believe in its advantages too firmly. But no young man need feel hampered because of the lack of it. If business qualities are in him they will come to the surface. It is not the college education; it is the young man. Without its possession as great and honorable successes have been made as with it. Men are not accepted in the business world upon their collegiate diplomas, nor on the knowledge these imply. They are taken for what they are, for what they know.

The young man engaged in business to-

day in this country has advantages exceeding those of any generation before him. And I do not say this simply as an echo of what others before me have said, or to use a platitudinous phrase. There never was a time in the world's history when a young man had the opportunity to make something of himself that he has at the present day. He lives in a country where every success is possible; where a man can make of himself what he may choose; where energy and enterprise are appreciated, and a market is always ready for good wares. Young men have forged to the front wonderfully during the past ten years. Employers are more than ever willing to lay great responsibilities on their shoulders. Salaries are higher than ever; young men never before earned the incomes which are received by some to-day. All success is possible.

But a young man must be alert to every opportunity. He cannot forget himself for a moment in business. A man's best work-

ing years are not many, and when they are upon him he must make hay, and all the hay he can. No young man can afford to reach the age of thirty without feeling that he is settled in a business way. Before that time he flounders; but at thirty the floundering time should be over. He should have found that special trade or profession for which he thinks he is most capable. This age is generally accepted, I believe, for the reason that a man is most likely to do his best work between thirty and forty; after forty a man's work is not apt to have that energy and snap that is born of youth, and the tendency is first shown in his willingness to deputize details to others. I do not mean to say that a man begins to decline at forty; on the contrary, he is at his prime, and he remains so for ten or fifteen years. But he is better for judgment than he is for working out details. A man's real work, his energetic work, his laborious work, is generally done before he reaches thirty-five.

And not only must he practically make himself between thirty and forty, but he must not spend all that he earns. He must lay aside a goodly portion of his earnings. It is a cruel but a hard fact that the business world has very little use for what are termed old men nowadays; and in these times of keen competitive strife a man is judged to be old very early from the cold commercial point of view. He may not consider himself as being old, but he is no longer considered to be "in the race" with the younger men, who naturally have quicker perceptions and whose sense of alertness is necessarily keener. The most successful man at forty is very often the man who is quietly pushed aside at sixty. If young men earning good incomes between thirty and forty would look a little ahead, and consider the inevitable fact that as they grow older their value is very apt to lessen in a commercial sense, they would save themselves much after-humiliation and sorrowful retrospection. It is hard for a young

man at, say, thirty-five, in the full flush and vigor of manhood, to realize that a time will come when others as clever as himself and a bit cleverer will pass him by. But the cold fact exists, nevertheless, and he is wise who, at his prime, thinks of a time which is almost sure to come to every man who lives.

And yet, while a young man may be ambitious for success in business, he cannot afford to get impatient or restless. Not long ago I received a letter from a young fellow which particularly reflected the feeling that I mean. He wrote me that he was twenty, and was impatient because he did not make the progress in his business which he felt that he should. He confessed that he was not so very much dissatisfied with his salary, which was twenty-two dollars per week, although he thought it ought to be forty dollars. Unfortunately for him, however, his employers did not seem to think so, and he was quite sure he was "being kept back." He conceded that he

was "becoming impatient," but insisted that he had reason to feel so.

Well, I felt precisely the same way when I was twenty; only my salary was eighteen dollars and thirty-three cents per week, and I felt quite sure that the figures ought to be reversed. And there were several positions just beyond me, too, which I felt I should justly be asked to occupy. But I was not, and, of course, I felt aggrieved. I considered myself imposed upon. Now when I look back upon that time I can see that the reason my salary was not thirty-three dollars and eighteen cents was simply because I was incapable of earning that amount. I was not worth it to my employer. And the reason I did not get those several positions just ahead of me was because I could not have filled them if I had gotten them—not one of them. But I am a little more than twenty now, and my correspondent, when he is about ten years older, will understand a great many

things that are not very clear to him just now. Of course he probably will not choose to believe this; youths of twenty are not apt to believe much that is told them, since they have so little to learn!

But, if I were back to twenty again, and, with my later knowledge, were earning twenty-two dollars per week, I should not only be satisfied, but I should be intensely thankful. I think, too, that the knowledge that there were thousands of men of forty and fifty years who were not earning as much would help me to endure the ordeal. I think that instead of rebelling at the fact that I was earning twenty-two dollars, I should rather devote my time to trying to find the best way of doubling it. I might not be able to make twenty-five dollars for a year or two, but I should endeavor to do so. In fact, if we look over the field, there are more young men of twenty-one who are worth less than twenty-five dollars per week than there are who are worth that or more.

And one proof of this is found in the fact that in New York City alone there are tens of thousands of young men at that age who are not earning eighteen dollars per week. In addition to all this I might be tempted to believe that too rapid advance might not be the best thing in the world for me. Too large an income, even when deserved, is far often more of a hindrance to a young man of twenty-one or thereabouts than a help. What I should feel willing to do would be this: if I felt that my employer was a man of honor and judgment I should leave myself in his hands for a while. I should do him the courtesy of believing that he knew more than I did. A man at fifty is sometimes apt to know more—if only a very little more—than a boy of twenty; and if I had his confidence and felt that I was pleasing him with my services, I should let him go at that—for a time, at any rate.

There are hundreds of young men in business to-day who feel just as restless and

impatient as did this correspondent. But these young men should bear a few things in mind. They should remember, first of all, that between the years of twenty and twenty-five a young man acquires rather than achieves. It is the learning period of life, the experience-gaining time. Knowledge that is worth anything does not come to us until we are past twenty-five. The mind before that age is incapable of forming wise judgments. The great art of accurate decision in business matters is not acquired in a few weeks of commercial life. It is the result of years. It is not only the power within himself, but the experience behind him, that makes a successful business man. The commercial world is only a greater school than the one of slates and slate-pencils. No boy, after attending school for five years, would consider himself competent to teach. And surely five years of commercial apprenticeship will not fit a young man to assume a position of trust, nor give him the

capacity to decide upon important business matters. In the first five years—yes, in the first ten years—of a young man's business life he is only in the primary department of the great commercial world. It is for him, then, to study methods, to observe other men—in short, to learn and not hope to achieve. That will come later. Business, simple as it may look to the young man, is, nevertheless, a very intricate affair, and it is only by years of closest study that we master an understanding of it.

The electric atmosphere of the American business world is all too apt to make our young men impatient. They want to fly before they can even walk well. Ambition is a splendid thing in any young man. But getting along too fast is just as injurious as getting along too slow. A young man between twenty and twenty-five must be patient. I know patience is a difficult thing to cultivate, but it is among the first lessons we must learn in business. A good stock of

patience, acquired in early life, will stand a man in good stead in later years. It is a handy thing to have and draw upon, and makes a splendid safety-valve. Because a young man, as he approaches twenty-five, begins to see things more plainly than he did five years before, he must not get the idea that he is a business man yet, and entitled to a man's salary. If business questions which he did not understand five years before now begin to look clearer to him, it is because he is passing through the transitory state that divides the immature judgment of the young man from the ripening penetration of the man. He is simply beginning. From that point he will grow, and his salary will grow as he grows. But Rome was not built in a day, and a business man is not made in a night. As experience comes, the judgment will become mature; and by the time the young man reaches thirty he will begin to realize that he did not know as much at twenty-five as he thought he did. And

when he is ready to learn from others he will begin to grow wise. And when he reaches that state where he is willing to concede that he has not a "corner" in knowledge, he will be stepping out of the chrysalis of youth.

And so to a young man in business or just starting in business I would say, remember these very essential truths.

Above all things, before a young man attempts to make a success he should convince himself that he is in a congenial business. Whether it be a trade or a profession —both are honorable and productive—let him satisfy himself, above everything else, that it enlists his personal interest. If a man shows that he has his work at heart his success can be relied on. Personal interest in any work will bring other things; but all the other essentials combined cannot create personal interest. That must exist first; then two thirds of the battle is won. Fully satisfied that he is in that particular line of business for which he feels a stronger,

warmer interest than for any other, then he should remember:

First, that, whatever else he may strive to be, he must, above all, be absolutely honest. From honorable principles he can never swerve. A temporary success is often possible on what are not exactly dishonest, but "shady" lines. Such success, however, is only temporary, with a certainty of permanent loss. The surest business successes—yes, the only successes worth the making—are built upon honest foundations. There can be no "blinking" at the truth or at honesty, no half-way compromise. There is but one way to be successful, and that is to be absolutely honest; and there is but one way of being honest. Honesty is not only the foundation, but the capstone as well, of business success.

Second, he must be alert, alive to every opportunity. He cannot afford to lose a single point, for that single point might prove the very link that would make complete the whole chain of a business success.

Third, he must ever be willing to learn, never overlooking the fact that others have long ago forgotten what he has still to learn. Firmness of decision is an admirable trait in business. The young man whose opinion can be tossed from one side to another is poor material. But youth is full of errors, and caution is a strong trait.

Fourth, if he be wise he will entirely avoid the use of liquors. If the question of harm done by intoxicating liquor is an open one, the question of the actual good derived from it is not.

Fifth, let him remember that a young man's strongest recommendation is his respectability. Some young men, apparently successful, may be flashy in dress, loud in manner, and disrespectful of women and sacred things. But the young man who is respectable always wears best. The way a young man carries himself in his private life ofttimes means much to him in his business career. No matter where he is, or in whose

company, respectability, and all that it implies, will always command respect.

And if any young man wishes a set of rules even more concise, here it is:

Get into a business you like.

Devote yourself to it.

Be honest in everything.

Employ caution; think out a thing well before you enter upon it.

Sleep eight hours every night.

Do everything that means keeping in good health.

School yourself not to worry; worry kills, work does not.

Avoid liquors of all kinds.

If you must smoke, smoke moderately.

Shun discussion on two points—religion and politics.

And last, but not least, marry a true woman, and have your own home.

IV

HIS SOCIAL LIFE AND AMUSEMENTS

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THE social life of a young man has a direct and important bearing upon his success, and he cannot be too careful of what forms of amusement he allows to come into his hours of leisure.

From a business standpoint it is all-important that he keep a careful watch on his social habits. For it is not enough for any young man that he should only take care of himself during his working-hours. To social dissipations at night can be traced the downfall of hundreds upon hundreds of young men. The idea that an employer has no control over a young man's time away from the office is a dangerous fallacy. An employer has every right to ask that those into whose

hands he intrusts responsibilities shall follow social habits which will not endanger his interests upon the morrow. So far as social life is concerned, young men generally run to extremes. Either they do not go out at all, which is stagnating, or they go out too much, which is deadly. Only here and there is found one who knows the happy medium; a certain amount of social diversion is essential to everybody—boy, man, girl, or woman; and particularly so to a young man with a career to make. To come into contact with the social side of people is broadening; it is educative. "To know people," says a writer, "you must see them at play." Social life can be made a study at the same time that it is made a pleasure. To know the wants of people, to learn their softer side, you must come into contact with their social natures. No young man can afford to deny himself certain pleasures, or a reasonable amount of contact with people in the outer world. It is to his advantage that

people should know he exists; it is important to the wise shaping of his aims and aspirations. It is well for him to keep himself honorably in the eyes of people. His evening diversions should be as widely different from his occupations during the day as possible. The mind needs a change of thought as well as does the body a change of raiment. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" contains a vast amount of truth.

At the same time, nothing is more injurious to the chances of a young man in business than an over-indulgence in the pleasures of what, for the want of a better word, we call "society." It is a rough but a true saying that "a man cannot drink whisky and be in business." Perhaps a softer and more refined translation of this is that a man cannot be in society and be in business. This is impossible, and nothing that a young man can bear in mind will stand him to such good account as this fact. No mind can be fresh in the morning that has been kept at a ten-

sion the night before by late hours, or been befogged by indulgence in late suppers. We need more sleep at twenty or twenty-five than we do at fifty; and the young man who grants himself less than eight hours' sleep every night just robs himself of so much vitality. So far as the required amount of sleeping is concerned, I hold to this inexorable rule: sleep eight hours every night and an extra hour whenever possible. The most successful men have repeatedly acknowledged that to a regularity in hours of retiring they can trace a large part of their ability to compass the questions which enter into a successful career.

One rule should be positive with every young man: the midnight hours should be passed in sleep; and by these hours I mean eleven and twelve o'clock. If a young man makes it a rule to be asleep by eleven and up by seven, he chooses the course which hundreds of the most successful men of the day have chosen. The loss of vitality

brought by less than eight hours' sleep may not be felt or noticed at present, but the process of sleeping is only nature's banking system of principal and interest. A mind capable of the fulfilment of its highest duties should be receptive to ideas, quick to comprehend, instantaneous in its conception of a point. With a fresh mind and a clear brain a young man has two of the greatest levers of success. These cannot be retained under social indulgences. The dissipation of a night has its invariable influence upon the work of the morrow. I do not preach total abstinence of any habits to which human nature is prone. Every man ought to know what is good for him and what is injurious to his best interests. But an excess of anything is injurious, and a young man on the threshold of a business career cannot afford to be excessive in a single direction. He should husband his resources. He will need them all.

For no success is easily made in these days. Appearances are tremendously de-

ceptive in this respect. We see men making what we choose to regard and what are known as quick successes, because at a comparatively early age they acquire position or means. But one needs only to study the conditions of the business life of to-day to see how impossible it is to achieve any success except by the severest patience and by the very hardest work. No young man need approach a business career with the idea that its achievement is easy. The histories of successful men tell us all too clearly the lessons of the patience and efforts of years. Some men compass a successful career in less time than others. And if the methods employed are necessarily different, the requirements are precisely the same. It is a story of hard work in every case, of close application, and of a patient mastery of the problem in hand. Advantages of education will come in at times and push one man ahead of another. But a practical business knowledge is apt to be a greater possession.

"But," says some young fellow, "what are the social pleasures and indulgences which injuriously affect a young man's success?" Only one general answer can be given, and it is this: any social pleasure or indulgence which affects a young man's health affects his success. Good health is the foundation of all possible success in life; affect the one and you affect the other.

I presume it is safe to say that no single element in social life has injured so many young men as an indulgence in intoxicating liquors, and I shall treat of this first. And in doing so I shall take the matter entirely away from the moral standpoint, and place it simply on its best and wisest basis, that of principle. Many a writer—too many, alas! —has held forth on this subject of wine-drinking and young men, and pointed out its moral aspects. This is all very well as far as it goes; but I think that if more writers placed their young-men readers on their honor in this matter it would be infinitely

better. It is not a question of whether it is right or wrong for a young man to indulge in spirituous drinks, so far as his success is concerned. It simply amounts to one thing: he absolutely cannot do it. And I can say this to every young fellow from my own experience and observation as a young man who, when he started out, did not know exactly what position to take.

I was about sixteen years old, if I remember rightly, when I began attending public dinners and assemblages in the capacity of a newspaper reporter. Wines were then more freely used at dinners than now, and I soon saw that I must make up my mind whether at these gatherings I should partake of wines or decline them. I had been trained to the belief that it was always best to err on the safe side, and as I sat down to my first public dinner—a New England dinner in Brooklyn—I shielded the wine-glasses set before me as the waiters came to my plate, and this practice I have followed ever since.

At first my principle never to touch liquor or spirits of any kind directed to me the chaffings of my friends. I was told it looked "babyish"; that I could not expect to go out much and keep to my principle; that I would often find it considered discourteous to refuse a simple glass of wine tendered by my hostess. But I made up my mind that there was no use of having a principle unless one stuck to it. And I soon saw that people respected me the more for it. And just let me say right here to all young men: I never lost one friend by my refusals, but I made scores of friendships—of men, from one who has occupied the presidential chair down; of women, among whom are the best and most famous in our land to-day.

I honestly believe that a young man who starts out in life with a fixed principle—whether it be that he will not drink, or smoke, or indulge in anything which in his heart he feels is not good for him, or in which he does not conscientiously believe—and adheres to

that principle, no matter under what circumstances he may be placed, holds in his hand one of the most powerful elements of success in the world to-day. There is a great deal of common sense abroad in this world of ours, and a young man with a good principle is always safe to depend upon it. The men and women whose friendships are worth having are the men and women who have principles themselves, and respect them in others, especially when they find them in a young man.

Another thing which led me to make up my mind never to touch liquor was the damage which I saw wrought by it upon some of the finest minds with which it was ever my privilege to come in contact; and I concluded that what had resulted injuriously to others might prove so to me. I have seen, even in my few years of professional life, some of the smartest—yea, brilliant—literary men dethroned from splendid positions owing to nothing else but their indul-

gence in wine. I have known men with salaries of thousands of dollars per year, occupying positions which hundreds would strive a lifetime to attain, come to beggary from drink. Only recently there applied to me, for any position I could offer him, one of the most brilliant editorial writers in the newspaper profession—a man who, two years ago, easily commanded one hundred dollars for a single article in his special field. That man became so unreliable from drink that editors are now afraid of his articles; and although he can to-day write as forcible editorials as at any time during his life, he sits in a cellar in one of our cities writing newspaper wrappers for one dollar per thousand. And that is only one instance of several I could recite here. I do not hold my friend up as a "terrible example"; he is but a type who convinced me, and may convince others, that a clear mind and liquor do not go together.

I know it is said, when one brings up such

an instance as this, "Oh well, that man drank to excess. One glass will hurt no one." How do these people know that it will not? One drop of kerosene has been known to throw into flame an almost hopeless fire, and one glass of liquor may fan into a flame a smoldering spark hid away where we never thought it existed. The spark may be there and it may not. Why take the risk? Liquor to a healthy young man will never do him the least particle of good; it may do him harm. The man for whom I have absolutely no use is the man who is continually asking a young man to "just have a little; one glass, you know." A man who will wittingly urge a young man whom he knows has a principle against liquor is a man for whom a halter is too good.

Then, as I looked around and came to know more of people and things, I found the always unanswerable argument in favor of a young man's abstinence, i.e., that the most successful men in America to-day are those

who seldom, if ever, lift a wine-glass to their lips. Becoming interested in this fact, I had the curiosity to personally inquire into it, and of twenty-eight of the leading business men in the country whose names I selected at random, twenty-two were abstainers. I made up my mind that there was some reason for this. If liquor brought safe pleasures, why did these men abstain from it? If, as some say, it is a stimulant to a busy man, why did not these men, directing the largest business interests in this country, resort to it? And when I saw that these were the men whose opinions in great business matters were accepted by the leading concerns of the world, I concluded that their judgment in the use of liquor would satisfy me. If their judgment in business matters could command the respect and attention of the leaders of trade on both sides of the sea, their decision as to the use of liquor was not apt to be wrong. At least, it was good enough for me.

As opportunities have come to me to go into homes and public places, I find that I do not occupy a solitary position. The tendency to abstain from liquor is growing more and more among young men of to-day. The brightest young men I know, who are filling positions of power and promise, never touch a drop of beer, wines, or intoxicants of any sort. And the young man who to-day makes up his mind that he will be on the safe side and adhere to strict abstinence will find that he is not alone. He has now the very best element in business and social life in the largest cities of our land with him.

He will not be chided for his principle, but through it will command respect.

It will not retard him in commercial success, but prove his surest help.

It will win him no enemies, but bring him the friendship of upright men and good women.

It will win him surer favor than aught else in eyes which he will sometime in his life

think are the sweetest he has ever looked into.

It will insure him the highest commercial esteem and the brightest social position.

And as it molds his character in youth, so will it develop him into a successful man and a good citizen.

I know young men are sometimes inclined to believe that abstinence from wines is apt to prove a barrier to their social success. "It looks unsociable," it is claimed. But my own experience has demonstrated to me otherwise. I have found that a young man's best and highest social success is assured just in proportion as he abstains from wines. An indulgence in intoxicants of any sort has never helped a man to any social position worth the having; on the contrary, it has kept many from attaining a position to which by birth and good breeding and all other qualifications they were entitled. No young man will ever find that the principle of abstinence from liquor is a barrier to any suc-

cess, social, commercial, or otherwise. On the other hand, it is the one principle in his life which will, in the long run, help him more than any other. And touching the point of etiquette on this question, whether it is in better form in drinking wines at dinner to turn down one's glasses or have them removed, I would say, neither. Simply shield the glasses with the hand as the waiter reaches your place at the table with each course of wine. Turning down one's wine-glasses or causing them to be removed from the table always seems to me to be an unnecessary and rather a disagreeable way of pronouncing one's principles.

So far as the habit of smoking is concerned —whether it takes the form of a cigarette, cigar, or pipe—I do not believe in the idea which tells a young man that he must not smoke. I say, rather, he will be wisest if he does not smoke. His health will be the better for it and his pocket-book the fatter. If the physical or mental injury to be derived

from smoking is an open question, the good it does is not. Smoking does absolutely no good to any one; it is simply a question of the extent of harm that it does. But if a young fellow is inclined to smoke, if he has a taste for it that he feels he must indulge, then I say, smoke moderately. The greatest danger in smoking is in the imperceptible growth of the habit; and this is particularly true of cigarette-smoking, now so prevalent among young men. Unless a young man has himself well in hand, and can govern his passions, he will find that cigarette-smoking has a nasty way of growing upon one. He may at first smoke only two or three cigarettes per day. After a while he adds a fourth. In a year it will be five per day; and so it goes on multiplying, but never diminishing, until the habit gets a hold which many find it impossible to shake off. Then follow irritability, nervousness, loss of memory and of appetite, and all kindred complaints, which are killing to a young fellow's

health, and necessarily to his success and happiness. This, to my mind, is the danger which lurks in tobacco; the actual harm is not in its use, but in its abuse. And use easily leads to abuse in the vast majority of cases. An excuse is always at hand to make an extra cigarette or cigar permissible on a special occasion. But after a bit special occasions multiply. I believe that if young men would not smoke until they attained their thirtieth year, it would be the wisest solution of this whole question. One thing is certain: the young man who does not smoke is far better off than he who does; and I think any one addicted to tobacco will agree with this statement.

It is only natural that no young man desires to remain at home every evening of the week; and the question naturally arises, What are the best amusements for a young fellow? And on this point opinions must necessarily differ.

For example, there is the question of at-

tendance at the theater. There are people—and delightful, good, and conscientious people they are, too—who sincerely disapprove of the theater. To their minds the playhouse is simply a trick of the devil to lure young men to destruction. And, as plays go nowadays, I must confess that they are not far from the right. Our theaters are unquestionably suffering from a deluge of plays most of which are morally bad and some of which are artistically worthless. But the dramatic history of every country has waves of this sort.

To condemn the theater as an institution, however, and say to young men indiscriminately that they must keep away from it, is, to my mind, wrong. Because there are bad plays it does not necessarily follow that there are no good plays. There are—not in plenty, I confess, but nevertheless they exist. I believe in the theater in moderation, so long as good actors and good plays are selected. Then I hold that the theater is a source of

education to a young man.—It will bring before him the lessons of life in a more effective way than is possible by any method of reading or studying. But no general rule can be followed in this form, or, for that matter, in any other form of amusement. To some young men the theater is an absolute harm, and has an injurious effect. If he is of susceptible mind and of weak character, he will be influenced by the life he sees on the stage, believe it to be real, and, ofttimes as not, he will fashion his own life and desires by it. This is where the theater does positive injury, and such a young man should never attend it. If, however, he is strong of character, and goes to the theater in the right spirit, I believe it is good for him. A good play is a wonderful stimulant, a powerful rejuvenant of spirits. It pleases the senses as nothing else can do; it takes the mind away from every-day affairs in a way that no factor in life, save, perhaps, a good book, does. And a good play is as

beneficial as a good book. As I have said before, it is unfortunate that we have so few really good plays on the boards of our theaters; but they are there, and we can find them if we will only look out for them. And with care in our selection, it does us all good to go to the theater and enjoy a hearty laugh, or to see the mirror held up to nature.

Young men are often puzzled, too, as to the right position to assume as regards dancing. So far as this form of amusement is concerned, I have always liked to believe that dancing, like going to the theater, is good when enjoyed in moderation. Its unhealthy possibilities in a moral sense no young fellow of the right sort ever thinks of or considers. It is only when they are discussed—as, unfortunately, they are all too often in print—that they suggest themselves. Dancing, to my mind, when it is not indulged in promiscuously, but with friends and acquaintances of the opposite sex, is one of the highest forms of enjoy-

ment, and one that gives to a young fellow what we all should possess, grace and the ability to carry ourselves well. But, like all good things, dancing can be abused, and then the injurious effects come in. If a young fellow goes to a dance, and dances all evening without any regard to his physical abilities, he exhausts himself and is unfit for his regular duties on the morrow. When the practice is followed in this wise, and a late supper—which generally means cold or iced foods on a heated stomach—is indulged in, then one of the most graceful and enjoyable of pleasures is taken out of its proper place and becomes an injury.

There is one thing, however, which a young man carving his own career in the world soon finds out for himself, and it is that dances, as a rule, are very exhausting pleasures and generally mean late hours. And after a while he feels that they interfere with his business duties on the following day. Then it is that he must make a

choice, and, of course, dancing must suffer and "go by the board," so to speak. As I have said a few paragraphs back, any social pleasure which interferes with a young fellow's best business interests is bad. What one young man can stand another cannot, and hence every one must decide for himself. He need only keep his health in mind. If he finds that any pleasure—whether it be attendance at the theater, dancing, or what not—makes him wish next day that he had not indulged in it, it should be perfectly clear to him that that particular social pleasure is not for him, and he should give it up.

Card-playing has never had any special attraction for me, and so I can say very little for it. A good game of whist, euchre, cribbage, or hearts is enjoyable; but I have always felt that playing at whist, particularly with experts, is more or less of a mental strain, and should not be indulged in by those who are required to use their mental faculties during the day. To some, however,

it is a relaxation, a recreation, and to these it is good. I am inclined to believe, however, that the game of "poker" is one which a young man will be wisest if he does not learn, since it is almost invariably associated with gambling. And gambling at cards, or gambling or betting of any sort whatever, is a practice in which no self-respecting young fellow can indulge. It is generally the first step downward; and whether it tends in that way or not, it always, without exception, has its evil effects. Therefore it is wisest to shun it, and shun it absolutely.

The growth of outdoor sports in this country has made thousands of young men interested in wheeling, tennis, base-ball, foot-ball, and kindred sports; and no national sign is more encouraging. The deeper the interest which every young man evinces in manly sports the better it is not only for him in every possible way, but for the generation succeeding him. It betokens a clean, healthy mind when a young fellow takes an honest,

sincere interest in outdoor sports. But the great danger is in overdoing this. Sports are splendid in their place and at their time, but too many of our young men allow them to interfere with their business interests. A young man in business cannot allow his interest in base-ball, or any other sport, to become so absorbing as to take first place in his mind. There is no earthly reason why an interest in foot-ball, base-ball, or any other sport, confined within proper bounds and at the proper time, should not be good. But when a young fellow finds that he knows the standing of the base-ball clubs in the various leagues, or the names of the players, or their batting average, better than he knows the names of the customers of his employer, or the prices of the goods he is paid to sell, or the discounts of his house, then I say his interest is directed against his own good. Base-ball, or any other kind of ball, is a splendid thing—in its place. Nor is an interest in any legitimate sport or game harm-

ful so long as it is kept within bounds and not allowed to occupy the mind to the detriment of business interests. What are called "base-ball cranks" or "bicycle fiends" or "foot-ball enthusiasts" are never good business men, and their standing in the community is on a par with their overwrought interest.

A young man's social life and his indulgences must, in other words, be tempered with reason and common sense. He should have a social side to his nature, but that side must not dominate him. If it does, it affects his business interests; and a young man whose thoughts during business hours are fixed upon a pleasure of the evening before, or upon a sport of the morrow, soon finds himself outdistanced in the race for success by others who keep such things in their proper places. A little common sense here counts for much. It counts for everything, in fact.

V

"SOWING HIS WILD OATS"

V

"SOWING HIS WILD OATS"

IT is a common saying, and a belief equally as general, that it is not only essential, but it is assumed as right, that a young man should, at some time in his life, "sow his wild oats." This sowing of one's wild oats means, in plainer words, that a young man should have his "fling," as it is called; that is, he must "see the world."

Now, it has always seemed to me a great misfortune that the man who framed that sentence of "sowing wild oats" did not die before he constructed it. From the way some people talk one would imagine that every man had instilled into him at his birth

a certain amount of deviltry, which he must get rid of before he can become a man of honor. For what is called "sowing wild oats" is nothing more nor less than self-degradation to any young man. It does not make a man one particle more of a man because he has passed through a siege of riotous living and indiscretion when he was nineteen, twenty, or twenty-five; it makes him just so much less of a man. It dwarfs his views of life far more than it broadens them. And he realizes this afterward. He does not know one iota more of "life," except a certain phase of it, which, if it has glitter for him in youth, becomes a repellent remembrance to him when he is matured. The reputation and power that comes of right living and good character are what the man from forty to seventy covets, and nothing but the well-spent years of early life can secure these. There is no such thing as an investigation period in a man's life; at one period it is as important for him to be hon-

orable and true to the teachings of his mother as at another.

To my mind no young man need seek this "darker side of life" which the sowing of wild oats means. The good Lord knows that it forces itself upon our attention soon enough. It does not wait to be sought. A young man need not be afraid that he will fail to see it. He will see plenty of it, and without any seeking on his part, either. And even if he does fail to become conversant with it, he is the gainer in the end. There are a great many things which we can accept by inference as existing in this world. It is not a liberal education to see them. Too many young men have a burning itch to see wickedness—not to indulge in it, as they are quick to explain, but simply to see it. But the thousands of men who have never seen it have never felt themselves the losers. If anything, they are glad of it. It does not raise a man's ideal to come into contact with certain types of manhood or

womanhood which are only removed from the lowest types of the animal kingdom by virtue of the fact that the Creator chose to have them get through the world on two legs instead of four. The loftiest ideal of womanhood that a young man can form in his impressionable days will prove none too high for him in his years of maturity. To be true to the best that is within a man means, above all, to be an earnest believer in the very best qualities of womanhood. Let him accept by inference that there are two types of woman, the good and the bad. But he will be wiser and happier if he associate only with the former. There are hundreds of good women in this world to every one of the contrasting element. No young man has, therefore, a valid excuse for seeking the latter.

Sometimes this "sowing of wild oats" is deemed necessary to insure to a young man what is called "a broader view of life"; whereas, in reality, no means that could be devised gives him such a contracted, narrow,

and unsatisfactory standard. A broad view of life means the cultivation of a mind that can take in every part of the horizon of the truest living; that can see good in everything; that accepts the good, and rejects, not investigates, the bad. We can always leave that for some one else to do. The outlook from the wheel-house of an ocean steamer is far better than it is from the stoke-hole. Curiosity may lead some people to go down and look into the stoke-holes of life; but take my word for it, you will find the atmosphere purer and the vision clearer if you stay in the wheel-house. To see "the wheels go round" is a very instructive thing to do in directions where the motive is a good one, prompted by lofty ideas. But some "wheels" are far better unseen. Satisfy a healthy curiosity always, but shun the other kind. There is no satisfaction to be had, and a man whose curiosity overcomes him is always disgusted with the poor return he receives for his trouble.

The young man who reaches manhood without a knowledge of the dark and vicious side of human nature is far better off than the one who has seen it. He will lose nothing by not having seen it; not an ounce less of respect will be meted out to him. But he will feel prouder of himself, and men will respect him infinitely more for the strength of his will-power.

Not long since a young fellow wrote to me in this connection, and said in his letter: "What's the use of leading a straight life? Nobody gives you credit for it. Society expects a more or less diverting life from a young fellow; it accepts him as such. Practically, it calls him a 'ninny' if he doesn't diverge from the straight path once in a while. It only asks of him that he shall not be caught."

I can scarcely imagine a view of life so entirely wrong in its personal application. The *real* "use" of leading a "straight life" is apparently absolutely overlooked by this

young man, who seems to think that his life is lived for others rather than for himself. The "use" of leading an honorable life concerns itself with the young man himself. He is accountable to himself—to his own conscience, to his own heart. Of what possible satisfaction is it to get credit from others for doing what is best for one's self? Men do not lead honorable lives for the sake of getting credit for it—to win the hand of applause. They do it for themselves; for their own inner satisfaction, that they may be true to themselves and to the best that is within them.

Aside from this paramount fact, however, people do give a young man credit for the life that he leads, and they are far more often aware of it than the young man supposes. But it depends upon the people whose favor the young man values. If he seeks the recognition of what is so wrongly called and known as "society," a righteous life, an upright life, an honorable

life—in other words, a manly life—may not count for so much. But the aimless men and silly women who constitute that body called "society" figure for nothing in the life of an earnest young man. If, however, he associates with men who in his developing days can mean much to him, and whose acquaintance in later years will be a pride and a joy to him, if he finds company in women who arouse his best thoughts and truest motives, he will find that his life, free from blemish, is appreciated, is understood, is recognized, and is known. There is an indefinable chord which always draws the right men to the young man of pure life. They are the men who give credit to a young fellow who tries to live aright, and they are the only men worth his knowing. These men may not openly applaud him, but they will give him their confidence, their good will, their friendship; and in later years he will more fully understand what these elements mean to him. These men do not call

a young man a "ninny" when he leads an upright life; they call him a manly fellow, and they take him into their hearts and into their homes. By the best part of mankind a young man is always known by his true color. Of that he need never fear. An adherence to high principles shows itself in every thought and every action of a young man, and it always counts for something and much. And as he progresses in life, and a clearer understanding of the right kind of living comes to him, he will see with his own eyes that the men who hold the true respect of the world are the men who were pure-lived and who can fearlessly and honestly look every man and woman in the eye.

VI

IN MATTERS OF DRESS

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IN MATTERS OF DRESS

WE may like it or not, but we are judged in this world first for what we are, but also as we look; and a young man's common sense should teach him that it is always wise to create a good impression. It does much for him, and he cannot afford to ignore it. Good clothes cannot make a young man, but they are a help; and when carving out a career it is only pure justice to himself that he should take advantage of every point offered him. In other words, I believe it is a duty which every young man owes to himself to be well dressed. But to be well dressed does not necessarily imply the highest-priced clothes,

cut according to the latest patterns. It is just as possible to be well attired in clothes of moderate cost, so long as they are not "loud" or "showy," but quiet and neat.

The average young fellow undoubtedly errs in this matter of dress. With his tastes unfixed, in the majority of cases he goes to either one of two extremes: he either dresses shabbily because he claims he cannot afford to do otherwise, or he goes to the other extreme and tries to imitate the styles affected by the extremists in dress, and necessarily makes himself an object of ridicule.

Clothes are moderate enough in price nowadays to make it possible for every young man, no matter how humble his income, to be neatly attired. The secret of a neat appearance in dress does not depend upon the number of suits he may have, but upon the manner in which even a single suit is taken care of and how it is worn. Many a young man with a wardrobe of but two suits of clothes looks neater than another

who has five or six suits with which to alternate. The art of looking well depends, first, upon the choice of a suit, and, second, how it is taken care of. If a young man has a moderate income he should make it a point to select only the quiet patterns of dark colors. Not only is this more economical, but it is in better taste than are the lighter and more conspicuous clothes. If a young man will look around him a bit, he will find that the successful men of the day are always the most quiet dressers. Their clothes are never conspicuous; they detract rather than attract attention. It is only the fop of shallow mind who invites attention by his dress. There is a certain class of pictures that require elaborate gilt frames in order to set off the little merit they possess; and likewise are there scores of men who must dress conspicuously in order to gain even the most meager attention. Men who are least certain of their position always dress the showiest. Hence if a young man dresses quietly and neatly he

pursues not only the best, but the only wise course. His dress is a pretty accurate reflection of his character, and very often he is judged, to a certain extent, by the taste which he shows in his clothes.

But while a young man injures himself by showy dressing, he has no business to dress shabbily. Shabby clothes are no longer an eccentricity of genius. There are men of genius who have achieved deserved fame and substantial success who are absolutely indifferent to their appearance. And the world overlooks and forgives it. But this is only possible with men of commanding genius who are established; and the young man who takes these men as models so far as attire goes makes a sorry mistake. It is given to men of high position and of established success to follow a great many little eccentricities which are not overlooked in a young man struggling for a career.

Aside from the aspect of mere appearance, neatness in dress is undoubtedly a great inner

and outer factor in a young man's success. A neat suit of clothes communicates a sense of neatness to the body, and, in turn, this sense of neatness of the person is extended to the work in hand. As we feel, so unquestionably do we work. Our clothes unmistakably affect our feelings, as any man knows who has experienced the different sensation that comes to him when attired in a new suit from the feeling when wearing old clothes. No employer expects his clerks of moderate incomes to dress in the immediate fashions, but he likes to see them neat in appearance. It commends them to his attention. We all have an inner consciousness that a young man who keeps himself looking neat and clean is more worthy of our confidence than he who is regardless of his appearance and looks soiled and shabby. Neatness always attracts, just as shabbiness invariably repulses.

Particularly would I emphasize the value of clean linen to a young man. There is no

earthly excuse why any young fellow should wear soiled collars or cuffs. Soap and water are within the reach of the smallest purse, and the home or the outer laundry is accessible to all. No single element in his dress cuts more of a figure in a young man's success than his linen. However worn may be his clothes, his appearance always invites closer proximity when his linen is clean.

I do not wish to be understood as making too much of dress as a factor in a young man's life. But I believe in it sufficiently, and I have seen evidences again and again to strengthen that belief, that no young fellow anxious for his self-betterment can afford to slight his appearance. No fair computation can be offered as to what percentage of his income he should expend on his dress. That depends altogether too much on circumstances. But I thoroughly believe and strongly counsel that he should dress as well as his means allow; no better, but no worse. Money spent on a neat appearance is never

wasted with a man, be he young or old. The chief danger which the young man has to battle with is dressing beyond his means. A tendency toward extravagance is never justifiable, no matter what may be his income. Extravagance is always wasteful. But neither must he economize too closely. In a word, he should strive always to look neat; to present the best appearance he can.

The extreme styles presented in men's clothes are like the extreme styles fashioned for women: they should be left for those who have large wardrobes. The young man of limited wardrobe cannot afford to have anything in it which is in the immediate style one year and out of fashion the next year. Quiet patterns in clothes, in cravats, in shoes, and in linen are always in style. The marvelous combinations we see in young men's clothes, of extreme long coats, of light cloths and large patterns in suitings, of razor-pointed shoes, of pink shirts, white collars, and blue cravats, are generally worn by extremists in

dress, or by those of mediocre tastes whose exhibition of those tastes always keeps them in the lower stations of life. These styles should never be affected by the young man who wishes to gain the confidence of his superiors in business, or the respect of the people in social life whose friendships will be of value and benefit to him. A young man, so far as this matter of dress is concerned, cannot do better than always to remember this one inflexible rule: that the best dressers among men follow the same method as do the best dressers among women—they dress well, but quietly. And quiet dressing is always in good taste.

VII

HIS RELIGIOUS LIFE

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HIS RELIGIOUS LIFE

WHEN a writer seeks to present the religious life of a being, be he young man or patriarch, it naturally follows that he can only be general in what he says. Religion is too much a matter of one's innermost feelings, of one's own convictions, to be governed by rule or example. But in these days of men more or less wise, when many of the truths which our forefathers held sacred are being discussed in so-called "new lights," and when the convictions of many are disturbed by reason of these "new doctrines," it is well, I think, that young men should bear in mind one or two fundamental truths so far as the religious side of their lives is concerned.

It is not within the province of this book to treat either of dogmas or creeds, or of the necessity of church-going; but it does come within its lines to say these words to every young man who reads this chapter:

No matter what present revelations or subsequent discoveries may prove or seek to disprove as to religious teachings, one great essential can never be altered, and that is the necessity of a firm faith, an absolute belief, that a wise God rules over this universe and over the destiny of each and every living man, woman, or child. Whatever constitutes that God is not for us to solve. The wisest of us can only dimly comprehend it. Our minds are finite; the Spirit who rules us is infinite; and nothing finite can comprehend or understand the infinite. Enough is it for us to know that there is a God, that there is a Supreme Being, a Creator, a Ruler. That is all it is given us to know. It is all that the new-born infant can know; it is all that the finest and keenest mentality ever given to

man can know. But that there is a great Creator no one can doubt; everything in nature points to that one fact; and the young man who refuses to believe in the existence of a God makes the greatest and most momentous mistake of his life. Without that faith, without that absolute conviction, he is not only hindered or crippled in whatever he undertakes, but he is simply helpless. On that point he cannot afford to err; to doubt it, even in the light of the most advanced knowledge that can ever be presented, he cannot for one single moment allow himself. This much is absolute.

Another point is like unto it, and it is that every person can go to that Creator and Dispenser of all good, and receive, through supplication, guidance in all affairs. This is but another way of expressing an earnest, a heartfelt, an honest belief in prayer. Whatever arguments may be brought to bear upon this question, one thing remains undisputed: that an honest and earnest prayer sent forth

from the human heart to its Heavenly Father, for guidance or for help, is sure, and absolutely sure, to bring strength and enlightenment to the mind. No scientific analysis can refute this. Too many millions of people have experienced the truth of this in their lives. Argument on this point is pointless; it is fruitless. A young man might as well argue that he loved his mother. Conscious experience does more than theoretical argument, and that conscious experience has taught the happiest men and the best women who ever lived that there is a direct communication between God and the humblest person who ever lived, and that a prayer for guidance sent from the heart of man to that God is never lost. There is in every man and woman not alone substance of material matter, but a spiritual nature which, if kept in daily contact with its God, finds a response such as can come from no finite source. This truth no young man can hesitate to believe—the efficacy of prayer.

It requires no creed to believe it, no dogma, no form of religion. It is a simple belief that to ask a heavenly guidance in all things good and right means a fruition of the highest and best hopes of a man.

With this absolute faith in the existence of a God, and in prayer, only one thing more is needed to complete the fundamental basis of all religions—an honest effort to live according to our conscience and to the best and truest that is within ourselves.

Here, then, is a simple religion for any young man. If his heart craves it and his mind can compass it, he can go deeper into the question and believe more. But less he cannot accept. Nor, if he is wise, will he wish to accept less. All objections fall before so simple a code of belief. It asks for no great mental capacity; it is beyond the mental power of none. The rising and setting of the sun, the coming of the seasons, the downfall of night upon day, the birth of a child, the death of a man—everything proves to

the humblest mind that this is a religion which it can accept without hesitancy, without a single misgiving. When we go beyond these fundamental principles we go into questions which are complex and open to individual construction. However a young man may decide for himself those questions, he cannot shirk the three points I have dwelt upon. They will teach him a respect for all sacred things, without which no man can earn respect for himself. They will teach him charity for the faults of others, without which none can hope for lēniency for his own shortcomings. They will teach him to hold out the helping hand to others, without which he can himself never succeed. They will keep him close to the teachings and the beliefs of his mother, without which a young man is untrue to the source from which he sprang.

I think, so far as church attendance is concerned, that a young man serves his best interests if he is a regular attendant at some form of worship. I do not say he should or

must; I simply believe he is wisest if he does identify himself with some religious body which comes closest to his tastes and beliefs. Whatever be the faults of the church as an institution, a young man must never forget the fact that it is an order born of God, that he sanctioned it, and that if it has its shortcomings it is simply because man is not perfect. Young men with their critical faculties on the alert are prone to discover some single defect, or what looks to them as a defect, in some church with which they are acquainted, and foolishly condemn the church as an institution. Or they will see hypocrisy stand out bold and clear in some man or woman known as a devout attendant at church, and they condemn church-membership as a whole and belittle the influence of religious teachings. This is wrong, and hence it is unfair. None of us would think of condemning all the sweet flowers that grow simply because of a few that are poisonous to the touch. Or, because we know some women who do

not follow righteous lives, we certainly would not condemn the entire sex of women, which would necessarily include our own mother. We cannot condemn the many because of the few. A young man should keep his mind fixed on the purposes of the church as an institution, and those purposes affect him for the reason that the church is to-day the balancing power between this earth being a chaos and what it is. It is the greatest safeguard to home and society; and because of the fact that it is such a powerful safeguard, many things are made possible for him which, without the church, it would be impossible for him to enjoy. The church is an indispensable factor in our modern life, and it holds out more possibilities for good to a young man than any other single institution. Its influence is always sure, and he can depend upon it. The best people of our land are its upholders. The most successful men are among its believers and worship at its altar. Worship—true worship of the heart—

does not imply a sickly sentimentality, as some young men believe; to go to church is not "babyish," nor to stay away from it "smart." A true belief in the church and its fundamental teachings is one of the manliest qualities which one can possess. In its atmosphere of worship the spiritual—that is, the softer and gentler—side of man dominates the material side, and to a young man in the race for success this is all-essential. No young fellow can afford either to disbelieve in the church or to scoff at its workings or influence. The methods pursued may not always be to our liking or to our way of thinking, but that is, as I have said before, simply because earthly hands minister over it. But its aim is divine, and that every young man must believe and accept as a belief.

And here let me say a word touching the application of religious principles to a young man's business life. The question is asked, and as often discussed: "Is a life built upon

religious principles really compatible with a young man's business success?" Or sometimes it is put: "Does it really pay to be honest in business?" Or again: "Can a young fellow be religious and yet successful?" Of course all are but variations of the same question.

Now the simple fact of the matter boiled down is that a business success is absolutely impossible upon any other basis than an honorable one, followed upon lines of the very strictest honesty.

The great trouble with young men is that their ideas are altogether too much influenced by a few unfortunate examples of apparent success which are prominent—too prominent, alas!—in American life to-day. These examples, for the most part representing politicians, are regarded in the eyes of the world as successful; that is, they are talked about incessantly; interviewed by reporters; they lavishly buy diamonds for their wives and build costly houses; and all these are duly reported in

the newspapers. Young men read these things and ask themselves, "If he can, why not I?" Then they begin to look around for some "short cut to success," as one young fellow expressed it to me not long since. And it is precisely through this method of "cutting across lots" in business that scores of young men find themselves, after a while, completely baffled. And the man who has once had about him an unsavory taint in his business methods rarely—very rarely—rids himself of that atmosphere in the eyes of his confrères. How often we see some young man in business representative of the very best qualities that should win success! Every one agrees that he is brilliant. "He is clever," is the general verdict. He impresses one well in his manner, he is thoroughly businesslike, is energetic, and yet, somehow or other, he never seems to get into a place and stick there. People wonder at it, and excuse it on the ground that he has not quite found his right place. But some day the

secret is explained. "Yes, he *is* clever," says some old business man, "but, don't you know, he isn't—well, he isn't just safe!" Just safe! How much that expresses; how clearly that defines hundreds and hundreds of the smartest young men in business to-day! He is everything else, but he isn't "just safe"! He is not dishonest in any way, but he is, what is equally as bad, not quite reliable. To attain success he has, in other words, tried to "cut across lots." And rainbow-chasing is really a very commendable business in comparison with a young man's search for the "royal road to success." No success worth attaining is easy; the greater the obstacles to overcome the surer is the success when attained. "Royal roads" are poor highways to travel in any pursuit, and especially in a business calling.

It is strange how reluctant young men are to accept as the most vital truth in life that the most absolute honesty is the only kind of honesty that succeeds in business. It is not

a question of religion or religious beliefs. Honesty does not depend upon any religious creed or dogma that was ever conceived. It is a question of a young man's own conscience. He knows what is right and what is wrong. And yet, simple as the matter is, it is astonishing how difficult it is of understanding. An honest course in business seems too slow to the average young man. "I can't afford to plod along. I must strike, and strike quickly," is the sentiment. Ah yes, my friend, but not dishonestly. No young man can afford to even think of dishonesty. Success on honorable lines may sometimes seem slower in coming, but when it does come it outrivals in permanency all the so-called successes gained by other methods. To look at the methods of others is always a mistake. The successes of to-day are not given to the imitator, but to the originator. It makes no difference how other men may succeed—their success is theirs and not yours. You cannot partake of it. Every

man is a law unto himself. The most absolute integrity is the one and the only sure foundation of success. Such a success is lasting and the only one which wins respect. Other kinds of successes may seem so, but it is all in the seeming and not in the reality. Let a young man swerve from the path of honesty and it will surprise him how quickly every avenue of a lasting success is closed against him. Making money dishonestly is the most difficult thing to accomplish in the world, just as lying is the practice most wearing to the mind. It is the young man of unquestioned integrity who is selected for the important position. No business man ever places his business in the hands of a young man whom he feels he cannot absolutely trust. And to be trusted means to be honest. Honesty, and that alone, commands confidence. An honest life well directed is the only life for a young man to lead. It is the one life that is compatible with the largest and surest business success.

A religious life, whether in business or out of business, is one which every young man not only should, but can follow. It partakes of no gloom, as many suppose; it means no depression of spirits. It means simply the living of an upright life, a life of respectability. Religion is nothing more nor less than an adherence to the simple code I have presented: a recognition of a God, and an allegiance in manner of life to that God. And that manner of living is simply a healthy development of the spiritual nature—keeping close to one's best instincts. The communion of a man with his Creator comes with such a manner of living. But this is all that a religious life means. That comprises true religion, at once the easiest and the safest element for any young man to take into his life. It will stand the severest test, and will prove a veritable Rock of Gibraltar to him in time of anxiety and trouble.

VIII

HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD WOMEN

VIII

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THE attitude which a young man assumes toward women is one of the surest index-fingers to his character, and nothing stamps him with such unerring accuracy before men. And if this be true in a general sense of his attitude toward the whole sex, it applies with particular force to his position as son. "As is the son so will be the husband," is a well-known saying, and it is likewise true that as is the son so is the man. When a young man reverences his mother it is easy for him to believe in the nobility of the sex to which she belongs. And it is a correct belief.

That women are morally better and spiritually nobler than men should be believed by

every young man. No ideal of the best and truest qualities of womanhood is too high for him to set for himself. Such a belief of his young manhood will become a conviction of his later manhood. I know that it is the fashion of some men to speak lightly of women and womanhood; and young men in their susceptible years are sometimes apt to listen to these low standards, and inclined to accept them or be influenced by them. But of one thing every young fellow may be assured: that the man who speaks of woman in any but the most respectful terms is either a knave or a fool—very often he is both. And this is one of the few rules in life to which there is no exception. I wish that young men would more closely associate their mothers with women in general, and realize that every slur cast upon women as a sex is a slur upon their mothers. This is the feeling which prompted General Grant to give a lesson in politeness which will always be told of him. The story is doubtless

familiar to all how one evening an officer came into camp, and in a rollicking mood said to those assembled:

"I have such a rich story that I want to tell you. There are no women present, are there?"

Whereupon General Grant, lifting his eyes from the paper which he was reading, and looking his officer square in the eye, said slowly, but deliberately:

"No, but there are gentlemen present."

The rebuke was masterly, and it is one which young men cannot too vividly remember.

Nothing in this world stamps a man more decisively in the eyes of his fellow-men than the practice of telling "off-color" stories in which women are concerned. I have often seen this practice followed, but never yet have I seen a single instance when the story-teller did not lower himself in the estimation of his listeners. Men are prone to laugh at these stories when they are told them; but

privately I have noticed that they form their own opinion of the man who tells them, and the opinion is always of one kind. It is the man who upholds womanhood who commands the respect of other men; the man who attempts to lower it invariably invites their distrust. The men who hold that "every woman has her price" are the men who, in the estimation of other men, have no price at all, commercially, socially, or morally. The man who uses such an expression regarding woman simply apes the "smart" utterance of the first fool that God ever made, and after whose pattern all the other fools in this world were created. A man who truly loves his mother, wife, sister, or sweetheart never tells a story which lowers her sex in the eyes of others. He who tells such a story is always lacking in some one respect, and generally it is common decency. I have dwelt upon this point because I should like young fellows to believe more firmly than they do that it is not "caddishness" or

"babyishness" or "goody-goodyness" to refuse to listen to a story which makes light of women; it is one of the manliest qualities which a young fellow can show, and deep down in his heart every man will respect a young man for such a position. The higher order of men never forget that, being born of woman, they owe an obligation to their mother's sex which, as loyal sons and true gentlemen, forbids them to listen without protest to offensive stories in which woman is concerned. And no young man can listen to this class of stories without offending his mother, his sister, or the girl who a little later will teach him, through her own sweet life, that whatever is said to the moral detriment of her sex is a lie, and a reflection upon the two women who, one at the beginning of his life and the other at its ending, will prove his best friends—his mother and his wife.

It has often been said before, but it is one of those truths which can as often be said

again, that a woman is a man's truest and most loving friend, first, last, and all the time. And particularly is this so of a mother. I know perfectly well that young men are apt sometimes to think that their mothers are unreasonable. And they are, sometimes, undoubtedly, and a little selfish, too. But one point must not be forgotten: it is an unreasonableness and a selfishness born of a mother's surest instinct for the best interests of her boy. I can look back to my earliest years of young manhood and see where, again and again, I thought my mother was either wrong or unreasonable or prone to be a trifle too cautious. But I can also look back now, and I cannot see one instance in which after-events did not prove her to be right. And to-day it is easy to say that if it has been given me to achieve even the smallest measure of success in my life thus far, it is all and entirely due to the influence of my mother, and to my absolute confidence in

that influence. No woman has been so much to me, no woman is more to me at this moment that I write, than she who is my mother, my confidante, my truest and best friend—always watchful, always loving, always true, always the same. And gladly do I write this loving tribute to her, grateful that I can place it in her hands rather than on her grave.

There is no deeper or greater satisfaction to a man than to be able to have his mother live to see him fairly launched on a successful career of usefulness. If his father dies before he has made his mark in the world he does not seem to feel it so keenly. But somehow he always wants his mother to live long enough to see for herself that she did not give him life for naught, and that the world is a little better off for the being which she gave unto it. There wells up within his nature a peculiar sense of pride when some day his mother comes quietly to him, and

putting her arms around his neck, says, with all the tenderness of a mother's love, "You have done well, my boy. Now I am content to go." No matter how hard a man may have worked, such approval comes to him as his sweetest and richest reward. The applause of the world is little compared with such a motherly benediction, and more precious to him is the remembrance of that short sentence in after years than all the honors that can be showered upon him or the riches that may come to him. It has been my privilege to hear this sacred thought from the lips of more than one of the most famous of American men—men who are to-day leaders in their professions, others who have gone to their graves crowned with the ripest honors and fullest laurels of the world.

For men, even in their most mature years, are, after all, nothing but grown boys. The fond stroke of a mother's hand is as welcome at forty as at fourteen. The world never looks so bright to a man as when he sits

at his mother's side with her arms around him. A woman never seems so gentle as when she fondly strokes the recreant lock from his brow, after a trying day, and says, in that voice so familiar, but ever sweet, "You are tired, are you not, dear?" Ah, those women who come into a room when a man is almost worn out, and bring new life and new hope and new spirit with them! Those God-inspired mothers who say so much in a smile, who speak so lovingly to us in a look, who send a thrill of confidence through a man in a tender pressure of the hand! They know us so well. They knew us when we were children, but how much better they know us when we are men! We try to convince them that we are no longer boys, but only a quiet little smile and a fond little petting shows us the fallacy of our own words. They stroke our cheeks, and somehow the mind seems more restful and the brain ceases to throb. The things we try to hide from them are the very things we tell them about.

They know with a single look just what is troubling us, and although they never ask us, we pour out to them our worries just as we did when we were children. The quarrels of the playground have only become the worries of business, and the baby of the cradle has simply become the baby of the mother's heart.

It is easy for a man to think well of woman when he can look at her through the eyes of a good mother. And it is this which I want every young fellow to do. His mother should be the central figure of womanhood to him—his ideal, his standard; and while necessarily other women will suffer in comparison, it will only be in the respect that to the one he is a son, while to the others he is a man. The tenderest solicitude which a young man can show to his mother, the most unremitting care he can give her, are none too good for the life he owes to her. And the more tender his feelings for her the stronger he will find his faith grow in her

sex. There is no influence to be compared with that of a good woman over the life of a young man. It means everything to him, his success in every phase of life. Men are by nature coarse and brutal; it is the influence of woman which softens them. And we ought to be softened as much as we can. The good Lord knows we need it badly enough. But no influence is productive of the best and surest results unless we make ourselves susceptible to it. If we lack faith in woman, if we fail in the right ideal of womanhood, all her influence will be as naught upon us. From the beginning of the world woman has been man's leader. She has made him what he is to-day. All the qualities which we admire in men come from woman's influence. And a young man starting out in life cannot trust to an influence so sure and so safe as that which comes to him from the being of whose life he is a part, or in whose heart he finds a supreme place. Man's best friend is the woman who loves

him. That should be the faith of every young man toward woman; that should be his absolute conviction, and he should show it by an attitude of respect and deference toward her.

IX

THE QUESTION OF MARRIAGE

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NECESSARILY the question of marriage to a young man is an important one—perhaps the most important that is given him to solve when he reaches a marriageable age. To some young men it is easy of solution. They fall in love with some girl who occupies their every thought, they are married, and, as the story-books generally have it, "they live happily ever afterward." But to others it takes the form of a problem. They are troubled with sentimental perplexities; and if these do not enter into the matter, then it is either a question of the right girl, the means with which to marry, or the proper age. That the mat-

ter takes on one of these phases with the majority of young men there can be no doubt, since few men marry the girl who first strikes their fancy.

The first point to present in this question of marriage is the principle of it: that it is unquestionably for the good of almost every young man that he shall marry. There are no two sides to this for the great majority of young men. Of course there are reasons why a man, in some special instance, should choose to lead a single life; in fact, there are excellent reasons why it is best that some men should. I have known men to have inner conflicts with themselves for years, and then resolutely decide upon celibacy. Such decisions make heroes of some men. There are circumstances which sometimes enter into a man's life that make celibacy judicious and wise—circumstances not of his own choosing. There are men whose lofty estimate of women will not permit of their asking a woman to share what God in his wis-

dom has chosen to have them bear. That type of men exists. But to the majority of men it is decreed to marry and that they shall live in marriage.

When a young man deliberately lays out for himself a single life based upon any other than the strongest physical or mental reasons, he makes the mistake of his lifetime. If a young man refuses to marry because of a lack of faith in womanhood, or a distrust of the existence of those qualities generally attributed to woman, he errs, and he errs fatally. And the best evidence of this is found in the incontrovertible fact that the happiest men in the world to-day are the men who have believed in good womanhood, and have shown that belief by taking a good woman into their hearts and homes. There can be no disputing the fact that a man's life is never complete in its fullest happiness until that life is made whole and complete by the love of a true woman. The simplest reference to the history of men since the creation

of the world will demonstrate the truth of this assertion. Man has done nothing without woman; without her counsel he has become as a cipher in the world. Left alone, aside from the question of influence, he is helpless. No man ever lived who knows, for example, how to take care of himself. The absence of a wife from home has demonstrated to many a man how large and important a part she is of it and of him. The right kind of a wife knows better what is essential to her husband's comfort than he does himself—far better. He waits for illness to come, and then combats it, frequently when too late. But the wife sees the symptoms and uses preventives. Her keen insight tells her that her husband is unwell when sometimes he is not conscious of it himself. Women, we are told, know little of business; yet when business troubles come to a man a good wife is the source of all comfort to him. When he despairs she is hopeful. By her influence, perhaps, more than

by what she actually accomplishes, she brings new hope, new courage, and points the way to a new beginning. How often women have been the means of averting business disasters or the multiplying of failures with further implications the world will never know; but there are men who know it, and they are the men of whom to ask, "Is marriage a failure?"

It is an unfortunate fact that some men never get to a point where they understand woman. And yet to know woman, to properly understand her, to correctly interpret her best motives, is the deepest lesson that life can teach a man. Every man with a fair mind who clasps a good woman to his breast and calls her mother, wife, or sister will understand the import of these words. How a man can be a hater of woman I cannot conceive when through her so much can be added to his life. Nothing is such an incentive to a man to make the best of himself as the knowledge that there is

some one in the world who believes he is just the cleverest fellow alive; that there are eyes, far lovelier than all the stars in heaven to him, which sparkle at his coming; that there is a loving, womanly heart which beats quicker at the sound of his footsteps; that there is a nature ever ready to sympathize with him in his troubles and gladden at his victories—a dear, sweet, loving woman, who laughs with him, and puts her soft, loving arms around him when he is in trouble, rouses him to his better self, making him feel that, after all, this world is not such a bad place to live in. This, as many a man knows, is not a picture drawn from fancy; it finds its living reflection in thousands of homes all through this land and across the sea, in homes where men are happiest and where women are most content.

The bachelor is ofttimes happy in his single state—that is, for a bachelor. He may console himself with the reflection that he accounts only to himself, that he is his

own master, can go where he will and do as he chooses so long as he obeys the laws of society and of the land; but in his heart he knows he is but half of a complete thing. He knows that there is something lacking in his life which, if supplied, would make the complete whole. Business success may come to him, wealth may be his; but one way or another he feels the absence of some one to enjoy his successes with him. He wonders why it is that he does not always put forth his best efforts. He marvels whether, after all, a man does not need something outside of himself to draw him on and incite him to his utmost exertions. He may be courted for his money, he may have friendships innumerable, every comfort may be in his rooms; yet moments come to him when persistent thought points to something lacking in his life to round it out. Travel as he will, live on the best the world can provide, he feels, as I have heard it said of the millionaire owner of one of the greatest newspapers in

the land, roaming from one land to another, that few men are ofttimes more miserable in their daily lives than is he. He has everything the heart can wish for; more wealth than he can spend; costly residences on this side of the ocean and on the other; swift yachts are his, and swifter horses. Yet, while driving one day, and seeing in a passing carriage a man of his acquaintance sitting beside a devoted wife and two children, he said to a friend, "That man's whole fortune is not one half of my yearly income, and yet his life is a far happier one." And when his friend asked him in what the other's happiness exceeded his, James Gordon Bennett replied, "In having a good wife, and a lovely child for each knee."

Of the wisdom of marriage itself there can be no question. The knotty little problems which enter into it are another matter. Some of them find expression in the choice of the right girl. And here, naturally, is a question which no one can decide for another. It is a

man's heart which directs him to the woman whom he wants for his wife, never the finger of the adviser. "Love pointeth surely" is an old proverb, and it is as true to-day as upon the day it was written. Many a young man, however, stands undecided on this question of marriage. He believes that the only holy marriage, the only marriage from which can spring happiness, is that born of love. The girl with whom such a marriage is possible is perhaps within his eye. He loves her, he feels, and yet he hesitates. Why he hesitates he cannot sometimes explain. Sometimes there is another girl in the case, whom he acknowledges to himself he does not love quite so well, and yet he feels that she would bring to him something that the other girl does not: a certain social advancement, perhaps, a furtherance of his business interests, or an advantage of one kind or another. Again, there are young men who feel drawn toward accepting the girl of their own heart and choice, but are withheld by

parental opposition, or, if not exactly opposition, that parental indifference or coldness which is even more chilling and killing than open antagonism. They want the girl, and yet they do not want to offend their parents; or perhaps, as in some cases, it is friends that are considered. And so hesitancy and perplexity come in. The heart leads one way, some other interest or consideration draws another.

It is to the mind of such a young man that a girl awakens divers feelings, many of which are mistaken for love. It is love which draws him one way; it is an inherent sense of mere possession that draws him the other. And I am very free in saying that some young men are actuated in marrying simply because of this sense of mere possession. Nor do I mean the word "possession" here as applying to property. To marry a girl for her money is the most contemptuous act of which a man can be capable. It dwarfs him and it dwarfs the woman upon whom he in-

flicts the wrong. But it is the notion which gets into the heads of so many young men to marry a girl because of the possession of some trait, some art, some grace, which they have not themselves, and the girl's possession of it attracts them. Sometimes it is the girl's talent; at other times her education, or her traveled knowledge; again it is her beauty, her social graces, her ability to appear well, to dress well, to entertain well. The young man associates such a girl in his mind as a part of an establishment which is the dream of his young manhood. She would look well; she would always be able to entertain his friends, to help him in achieving a certain position; and he feels that he would be proud of her. And he would. But the satisfaction of a mere pride is not the satisfaction of the heart. Pride is very easily satisfied; and when it is satisfied it generally departs. In a few years he will want something more than an ornament to his home, and then he will find it wanting. For only

in rare cases do we find the useful and the ornamental combined in a single woman. To marry a girl because of some possession; because he simply likes her better, perhaps, than he does other girls; because, maybe, he respects, fancies, or admires her; because she seems to sympathize with him, is to establish a wrong basis for a happy marriage. Not one of these emotions can form the foundation for any truly happy marriage. They are things which appeal to us in any dear friend, man or woman. The girl who is to be a young man's companion for life, to be with him and of him as long as she or he may live, and to be the sharer of his joys or sorrows, to be a daughter to his mother and a mother to his children, must awaken other emotions in a young man's heart. She must awaken that true, affectionate love out of which all of the things of which I have spoken spring, but none of which alone or combined constitutes love itself.

The girl that a young man should marry,

and the only girl he is safe to marry, is she who fills all his life, his every thought, who guides him in his every act, whose face comes before him in everything that he does —the girl, in short, without whom he feels life would be a blank, without whom he could not live. That is the girl whom he loves, and it makes little difference whether such a girl be rich or poor, talented or not, traveled or untraveled. Enough is it for him if she is affectionate in her nature, sympathetic with his work, responsive to his thoughts, appreciative of his best qualities. These are the traits in a woman which last the longest, and remain with a man throughout his life. They are the traits in women which make good wives and better mothers. Knowledge is a good thing in a woman, but affection is infinitely better. Far wiser is the young man who marries the stupidest girl in the world, if she be affectionate, than he who marries the brightest girl in the universe, if she be cold, clammy, and unre-

sponsive in her disposition. We laugh at sentiment, we men, when we are young; when we have lived a lifetime we reverence it, and the jest becomes the tribute.

Another point, as I hinted above, which sometimes enters into a young man's thoughts of marriage is what is called by the world the "social station" of the girl he loves. Now what is termed "social station" is a very difficult thing to define. The habit of social distinction which so many families endeavor to engender and develop in contemplated marriage is, I think, one of the most unfortunate tendencies of the times. A social aristocracy has always been impossible in America, and it is never more impossible than at the present time. We need not be extremists in our beliefs, and refuse to admit that there exist grades and classes in American society. Our social lines are sufficiently drawn for individual protection, as they rightly should be, and must be in any great nation. But for any grade of society to

refuse a humane and proper recognition to a girl foreign, perhaps, to our special modes of living, is a piece of snobbery unworthy of any American family which thrives and prospers under American privileges and resources. We have in this country a class of people whose social standards are beneath contempt, and who consider it almost infectious to brush their mantles against the plainer cloaks of what they choose to call "the lower classes." We can, if we so choose, amuse ourselves in this country by believing that there is such a thing as American lineage. But when we permit this harmless amusement to become a settled belief and seriously discuss it, as I have heard it in some drawing-rooms, the matter passes out of the amusing and assumes the ridiculous. The great social strength of this country, the real substantial strength, hope, and life of this nation, lies with what is designated as the great average middle class; and from this class springs not only the mental,

physical, and moral bone and sinew of this republic, but the best type of womanhood which ornaments the American home to-day. The man or woman who to-day sneers at or casts a discreditable innuendo upon that class stamps himself or herself unworthy of being classed among intelligent people.

The truest, best, and sweetest type of the American girl of to-day does not come from the home of wealth; she steps out from a home where exists comfort rather than luxuries. She belongs to the great middle class —that class which has given us the best American wifehood; which has given helpmates to the foremost American men of our time; which teaches its daughters the true meaning of love; which teaches the manners of the drawing-room, but the practical life of the kitchen as well; which teaches its girls the responsibilities of wifehood and the greatness of motherhood. These girls may not ride in their carriages, they may not wear the most expensive gowns, they may even help a

little to enlarge the family income; but these girls are to-day the great bulwark of American society, not only present, but of the future. They represent the American home and what is best and truest in sweet domestic life, and they make the best wives for our American men. I have no patience with those theories that would seek to place the average American girl in any other position than that which she occupies, ornaments, and rightfully holds: the foremost place in our respect, our admiration, and our love. She is not the society girl of the day, and she is better for it. She knows no superficial life; she knows only the life in a home where husband, wife, and children are one in love, one in thoughts, and one in every action. She believes no woman to be so sweet as her mother; no man so good as her father. She believes that there are good women and true men in the world, and her belief is right. And that young man will ever be happiest who takes such a girl for his wife.

I seek not to disparage the home life of the wealthy of our land. Some of my best friends live in homes of luxury, are deemed by the world wealthy and fortunate, and the atmosphere of their homes is as pure and elevating as is their family life representative of every element that makes good women and men. Nor have I one word to say against honest ancestral pride. On the contrary, I believe in it. I think if we had more of it in this country it would be better. It is one of the greatest stimulants to a young man to know that he comes of a good family and that he is expected to so carry himself as to add respect and pride to the name of his family. A good family name is one of the strongest safeguards to a young man's respectability. We cannot underestimate the value of heredity. We should be proud of an honorable ancestry. But we should not boast of it, or use it to a detrimental comparison of the ancestry of others. That spirit is vulgar; certainly it is un-American.

Nor should any of us, who have been a little more favored with this world's goods, refuse to recognize good in those not possessed of equal possessions. I care not how tenderly the favored son of a wealthy home may have been reared; with what care and precision his mental and moral development may have been guarded and watched; what hopes may be centered in him: I will match his worth any hour of the day with a girl from a plainer home and of lesser advantages. "But her social position?" the proud mother asks. Social station? What is social station? So long as a girl is respectable, so long as she is good, so long as she is a loving, tender, and true woman, by what social standard can she be measured? What right have we to apply superficial standards to worth and character? What comparison can a social standard bear to the highest standard of morality, to good womanhood, to the best wifehood, to the truest conception of motherhood? Is the girl in an office less of a woman than the girl

who rides in her carriage? Is she less capable of making a good wife? Why do we marry? To please society? To uphold social standards as false as they are mythical? False pride has made enough trouble in this world without letting it bring grief into our homes. Let the young men of this country be sufficiently broad-minded not to measure a girl by her surroundings, but to judge her for herself. True worth lasts longer and wears to the end. The loving heart of a good girl is better than all the wealth and social accomplishments which she can bring to a man. It is something that comes back to a man three hundred and sixty-five times in a year. We can get along with a little money in this world if we will; but love is aquality of which we can scarce have too much.

And when the conditions are reversed, and the young man's income or financial possessions are taken into account, the same general principle is true. There is not a more

cruel standard by which to measure a young man than the position he is able to offer the girl of his choice. I am not an advocate of the "love-in-a-cottage" theory by any means; but I do believe in the good old-fashioned theory of a young couple starting out in the world with a moderate income, and then climbing upward together. I know this sounds visionary, and like the sort of reading we find in stories; but the truth is there just the same. I give it as my earnest conviction that a young girl will be far safer in the hands of a young man born of parents in moderate circumstances, honest in his principles, energetic and industrious, than she would with a young man who has known only the luxuries of life, and to whom work is an incidental matter rather than the aim and purpose of life. I do not care how poor a young man may be; if he has good health, sound principles, is respectful of sacred things, is temperate in his habits, and is not afraid to work, and work hard, and face the

world with a determination to succeed, that young man can be trusted with the best and sweetest girl ever reared in an American home.

At the same time I believe that no young man has a right to ask a girl to be his wife until he has reached a certain point in his life. And I would apply this both to his age and to his prospects. As to age, I think a young man should wait until he is at least twenty-five before he marries. Before that time his impressions and his fancies are apt to be fleeting. He drifts and flounders in almost everything he does—wife-choosing included—before he is twenty-five. He himself rarely knows what he wants in anything. He does not know the world nor its people. He may think he does—a young man between eighteen and twenty-five generally does—but he does not all the same. It requires him to reach and pass the twenty-five-year period to find out how little he knew before. After he passes twenty-five he be-

gins to learn, and from that time things come to have a meaning to him. The difference before and after this twenty-five-year period is that before he is twenty-five he wonders that he is so much more mature than others and knows so much; while after he passes twenty-five he wonders that he is so immature and knows so little. And when a young man reaches that point where he is convinced that he knows very little, then his time of learning commences. Young men generally think they know "a great deal about girls" when they are twenty-one, and can easily choose a wife. But the wisdom of twenty-one on that point is a little slippery, and I would advise no young man to test it.

Then, too, a young man has no conception of his capabilities before he reaches twenty-five. He has no fixed purpose in mind; he has no idea what he is capable of doing; he does not know the business world nor its chances. He has had no opportunity of showing his employers his capacity to fill a

more important position. He has, therefore, no practical idea of his prospects, and he can form none. The period between the ages of twenty and twenty-five is the formative period in his life, and during that time it is better that he has no additional responsibilities upon him other than his own struggles will demand. But when he reaches twenty-five he generally begins to develop. His opinions on matters begin to be listened to—casually, it is true, at first, but they command attention, nevertheless, where formerly they were ignored, and justly so. From this time his career begins, and he can, with a greater degree of accuracy, decide for himself whether he can ask the girl of his choice to share his life with him. Between twenty-five and thirty a young man should, if he hopes to amount to anything, choose his path in life and test his capabilities. And then it is that the love of a good wife and her counsel will mean everything to him. If we look at current statistics we find at once that the greater

majority—I think it is something like seventy per cent.—of our young men are marrying between twenty-five and thirty, with a leaning toward the latter age. Years ago it was different, and the marrying age for young men was between twenty-two and twenty-five.

But, likewise, a young man cannot afford to wait too long in this question of marriage; and when I say too long I mean beyond the age of thirty. After a man passes thirty years his habits are very likely to become fixed, and from that time it will be harder for him each year to tear away from his bachelor habits. For marriage demands a few sacrifices from a man, and he must be prepared to meet them, just as the girl gives up many of her girlish pleasures. Marriage is not a lark, as some young people are apt to suppose, and it should not be entered into just for the fun of the thing, nor for the sake of being married. Better is it for a young man never to marry than to marry simply for

the sake of marrying, or because he feels that he is getting along in years.

There is only one safe rule for a young man to follow in this whole question of marriage, and it solves the problem of the girl and the age: wait until the right girl comes along and then marry her. But, if possible, don't marry her this side of twenty years, and don't you marry this side of twenty-five.

Regarding the question of engagements, I believe thoroughly in their short duration. This whole question of matrimonial engagements might be changed somewhat by young people themselves, and to their own benefit. In many cases the young become engaged too soon, and then they are restless because they cannot marry; whereas, if the period of acquaintanceship were made longer, and the engagement time shorter, things would be much improved. Long engagements are never advisable; in fact, they are bad from every point of view; long periods of acquaintance previous to an engagement are far

better. So far as actually knowing each other is concerned—well, for that matter, what woman has ever known a man until after she is married to him, or what man has ever known a woman?

Touching the question of a young man's income when he marries, no rule can be laid down. There are thousands of married people who are living the happiest of lives on six hundred dollars per year, while there are thousands, on the other hand, who struggle to keep out of debt on six thousand a year. And so it goes. Everything depends upon the people. Hundreds of men constantly ask the question, "Can I marry on six hundred, eight hundred, or a thousand dollars per year?" No one can determine this question but the young fellow himself, and particularly the girl whom he loves. As I wrote to a young fellow who asked me if I believed it would be safe for him to marry on a thousand dollars per year, so do I say to all young men who are asking the

question, irrespective of the amount involved: no one can tell you. You and the girl in question must settle that. But, on general principles, I think the sooner we look at this question of marriage from some other than this strictly mercenary standpoint the better. I do not believe, as I said a few paragraphs back, in the theory of love in a cottage, with nothing else. But I do believe in young people starting at the lowest rung in the ladder and then climbing up. Nothing else in the world knits the interests of two people so closely together, or insures such absolute happiness in the future as their lives progress. I cannot advise any young fellow what to do, but I know if I were earning six hundred, eight hundred, or a thousand dollars a year, and I really loved a girl—felt, in other words, as if I could not live without her—and the girl was of the right kind—that is, sensible in her ideas, frugal in her tastes, and of a marriageable age—I would let her settle my doubt

for me. Girls have a very interesting way of settling doubts of this kind—when they are fond of the fellow in doubt. One thing is certain: the greatest safety in this world for a man is to place his interests in the keeping of the woman who loves him.

These are the only points which I or any other writer can possibly advance regarding this question of marriage. Every young man must necessarily settle it for himself; all that a writer can do is to lay down the best and what he considers to be the safest general principles, and each reader must apply those principles to his own individual needs and condition.

But there is one thing which a writer can safely do, and that is to counsel in every young man a firm belief in womanhood and an honest faith in marriage. He must not paint the marriage relation all of a rose-colored hue. Necessarily it has its purple lights; sometimes its black shadows. No condition of life is without its little trials, its

vexations, or its anxieties, and marriage is not an exception to this rule. But it is through the marriage state, through the love of woman, as I have said before, that man has reached his present status. Married to a woman, he may wonder now and then a little whether she is not rather expensive. Her ways may not always be his ways. Occasionally he may frown a little, and perhaps scold a bit. He may leave home in the morning and go to his office without the customary farewell kiss. He may sometimes get provoked because she is "so slow in getting ready" when he goes out with her. He may want to stay at home when she wants to go out. He may be led to say once in a great while, "Women are queer, and you are one of the queerest!" He may fly into a passion, only to feel sorry for it afterward. He may feel piqued at times because she is not home when he comes from the office; that dinner is not ready just at the precise moment when he wants it; that she wants to retire

about three hours earlier than he does. But, "after all," he says to himself, "I tell you what, my wife is an angel. She always seems to know what is best for me, and what is not. She looks at nothing in the light of a sacrifice. When I have been tired for three hours she keeps going. Well, she is my daily joy; sick, my comfort, and the best of nurses; in trouble, my star of hope. When I want to be rash she is cautious. I could stake my life on the honesty of a man; she, at a glance, has read his innermost thoughts and knows his character. And take her year in and year out she is the most patient, most loving, and dearest of women. Faults? Of course she has, but so have I—lots of them, too. I notice all she has, but some way or other she never seems to see mine, and talks only of my best side. And, after all, is she not right?" And then, as a pair of arms are twined around him from behind, as he sits in a comfortable chair, a soft, fluffy sleeve just rubs gently against his face, a pair of eyes

look into his eyes as he raises them, a pair of lips lovingly press his, a gentle, loving voice says, "Do you know, dear, you look very comfortable and happy," everything that is good swells up in him and finds its expression in the typical Americanism:

"You bet I am!"

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